

# **Child Outcomes and Volunteer Effectiveness:**

## **CASA's Role in Supporting Transition-Age Youth**

### ***Child Outcomes and Volunteer Effectiveness Study Follow-Up Part II***

#### **Summary**

Texas CASA contracted with the Child and Family Research Partnership to conduct a two-part follow-up to the Child Outcomes and Volunteer Effectiveness (COVE) study to examine the influence of CASA volunteers on teen outcomes specifically. In the first phase of the follow-up study, we compared outcomes between similar teens with and without a CASA volunteer and found that CASA teens are less likely to reunify, less likely to find a permanent placement through adoption or kin guardianship, and more likely to age out of care than teens without a CASA. Among teens who do not reunify but reach permanency through adoption or kin guardianship, CASA teens are more likely to be adopted than no-CASA teens. Additionally, among teens who do not reach permanency, teens with a CASA volunteer are more likely to formally age out of care rather than run away.

In the current report we present findings from the second phase of the follow-up study, in which we explore the current practices of CASA volunteers who work with teens, as well as CASA and CPS ideas about best practices, and compare outcomes during and after care for CASA and no-CASA teens, to the extent that limits in the data collected by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) allow. Across available measures, including completion of PAL training, participation in Extended Foster Care, and reentry into CPS as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect, CASA teens and no-CASA teens look similar. Among a small follow-up sample at age 19, CASA teens look somewhat better across employment, education, and wellbeing outcomes, but we do not have any of these aftercare measures for the full sample. Additional measures are needed to truly understand teens' preparedness for adult life.

Importantly, CASA volunteers, CASA staff, and CPS staff all consistently emphasized value in CASA's involvement in preparing teens to transition to adulthood. Key ways that CASA volunteers can support transition-age teens include discussing and encouraging PAL training, goal-setting with the teen, and ensuring the teen has sufficient opportunities to practice adult living skills. Actual CASA practices, however, vary on a case-by-case basis, and CPS staff reported that CASA volunteers are often not very involved or informed about the process of aging out. Based on a survey of the activities CASAs do with teens, we find that approximately one in ten CASA volunteers participated in experiential learning, such as helping the teen learn to cook, buy groceries, or use a bank on their most recent case, yet this is one of the key areas for CASA to support a teen from CPS staff's perspective, indicating that this is an important area for increased CASA involvement. Additionally, the knowledge of the transitional living services available to teens

and perspective on teens' best interest varies widely across individual volunteers and programs. Some programs have implemented trainings and provide substantial guidance to CASA volunteers, but other programs seem to lack infrastructure to support volunteers' work with teens. Our findings indicate that CASA volunteers play a valuable role in supporting teens to prepare for independence, and there is opportunity for growth in how CASA serves teens through ensuring all CASA volunteers are well-equipped to get involved in teens' preparations for adult life.

### Background and Purpose

Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (Texas CASA) contracted with Dr. Cynthia Osborne and the Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP) at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin to study the effectiveness of CASA services provided in Texas. To determine the effect of CASA services on the permanency, safety, and wellbeing of children in state care and to identify the factors that improve or limit the implementation of CASA services, CFRP designed and implemented the Child Outcomes and Volunteer Effectiveness (COVE) study. After the COVE study, Texas CASA contracted with CFRP to conduct a two-part follow-up study to specifically examine the influence of CASA on teenagers.

The key finding from the first phase of the follow-up study is that teenagers with a CASA are less likely to find permanency before aging out of care than similar teenagers without a CASA. More specifically, CASA teens are less likely to reunify, less likely to reach permanency through adoption or kin guardianship, and more likely to age out of care than their peers without a CASA. Among teens who did not reunify but found permanency, however, CASA teens were more likely to be adopted than teens without a CASA. Teens with a CASA were also more likely to formally age out of care, rather than running away from care or turning 18 while on runaway status.<sup>a</sup>

Aging out is generally considered the least desirable outcome for children in substitute care: youth who age out of foster care are more likely to experience early parenthood, criminal justice system involvement, unemployment, and homelessness than youth who attain other permanency outcomes.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the risks of aging out, teens also face risks associated with running away. Running away is common among teens in care,<sup>2</sup> and there are serious health and safety risks associated with running away from care for minors, including substance abuse, sleeping on the street, interruptions in schooling, and commercial sexual exploitation (sex trafficking).<sup>3</sup> Out of 25,000 runaway youth reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2017, one in seven were believed to be victims of commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>4</sup> Further, 88 percent of the children believed to be victims of trafficking were in child welfare custody when they ran away.<sup>5</sup> Teens who run away may return to care after a period of time; others may run away and not return before exiting legal conservatorship of the state. Teens who run away for long periods of time or who do not return to care are likely to be an

---

<sup>a</sup> For complete results on teen permanency outcomes, see the November 2018 report: Osborne, C., Huffman, J., Warner, H. A. (November 2018). Child Outcomes and Volunteer Effectiveness: Examining Youth Who Age Out of Care. Child and Family Research Partnership, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin.

increased risk for poor aftercare outcomes; in addition to the numerous health and safety risks faced while on the run, teens who run away for long periods or do not return to care likely participate in fewer services to prepare for independent living.

**Transitional Living Services in Texas**

Child Protective Services (CPS), as well as the state and federal government, provide a variety of services and resources, known as transitional living services, to teenagers in conservatorship. Transitional living services are intended to help teens prepare for adulthood in the event that they do not reach a permanent placement before aging out, and to support their transition to independence when they do age out of care. In Texas, the primary way that transitional living services are provided is through the Preparation for Adult Living, or PAL, program. The PAL program includes independent living skills training (PAL training), experiential learning provided by the teen’s caregiver, individualized case management and transition planning provided by regional contractors, and opportunities to receive financial benefits to support a teen’s transition to independent living.<sup>6</sup> Teens in Texas also have the opportunity to remain in Extended Foster Care until they turn 21, if a placement is available and the teen meets requirements to work or remain in school. Teens in state conservatorship typically begin receiving PAL services around their sixteenth birthday, though in some circumstances services begin as early as fourteen. When it is time for a teen to begin PAL, she is assigned a PAL caseworker, who then coordinates with the teen’s conservatorship caseworker and local PAL contractors to ensure the teen receives any needed services. Table 1 summarizes the main transitional living services provided in Texas and Appendix C provides additional details regarding the eligibility requirements for each resource.

**Table 1: Transitional Living Services in Texas**

Resource	Description
<b>Independent Living Skills Training (PAL Training)</b>	Local contractors train teens on health and safety, job readiness, financial management, decision-making, and relationships
<b>Experiential Learning</b>	Caregivers provide skills practice, such as meal preparation and money management
<b>Case Management and Aftercare Services</b>	Local contractors provide support to teens, including finding a job, locating housing, or counseling
<b>Transitional Living Allowance</b>	Teens who complete PAL may receive up to \$500 per month for the start-up costs of independent living (up to \$1,000)
<b>Aftercare Room and Board Assistance</b>	Teens receive up to \$500 per month for rent, utilities, utility deposits, food, etc. (up to \$3,000)
<b>Education and Training Voucher (ETV)</b>	Teens receive up to \$5,000 in financial assistance per year towards postsecondary education
<b>Tuition Fee Waiver</b>	Teens are exempt from payment of tuition and fees at any Texas state supported college or university
<b>Extended Foster Care</b>	Voluntary continuation of or return to a paid placement, pending placement availability

Source: DFPS Transitional Living Services Resource Guide, March 2019. Notes: For more detailed eligibility information, see Appendix C.

## Current Report

Understanding that teens served by CASA are more likely to age out of care, the purpose of the current report is to learn how CASA serves teens who are preparing to age out and assess whether teens with a CASA who age out are more prepared for adult life and reach better outcomes than teens without a CASA. We find numerous limitations in the data collected on teens preparing to age out, limiting our ability to compare preparedness and aftercare outcomes of CASA and no-CASA teens. We present findings using available measures of participation in transitional living services and during and aftercare outcomes, and supplement outcomes measures with findings from focus groups and surveys that provide context for the complex needs of teens in care. We also describe current CASA practices to highlight important ways that CASA volunteers support teens and identify opportunities for growth in CASA's service to teens.

## Methodology

To build on the findings presented in the November 2018 report comparing the permanency outcomes of CASA teens and no-CASA teens, we conducted a mixed-methods study to compare during and aftercare outcomes between CASA and no-CASA teens, learn about the context in which CASA works with teens, and identify helpful CASA practices.

## Data Sources

We used three primary data sources for the current report. To learn about teen outcomes during and after care we used DFPS administrative data (IMPACT data), including case management data and data collected for the National Youth in Transition Database Survey (NYTD survey).<sup>b</sup> To learn how CASA volunteers currently serve teens and opportunities for future work with teens from CASA volunteers at numerous local programs, we used Child Connections Survey data from 320 CASA volunteers across 18 local CASA programs.<sup>7</sup> The Child Connections Survey is a survey developed by CFRP and administered for the Collaborative Family Engagement evaluation; for this study we use four survey items that ask CASA volunteers about their work specifically with teens ages 16 to 18. To gain a more in-depth understanding of CASA's work with teens, we conducted focus groups with 18 CASA volunteers and eight CASA staff members, as well as focus groups with CPS staff that included nine conservatorship caseworkers, five PAL specialists, two conservatorship supervisors, and one other CPS staff member. In total, 26 CASA and 17 CPS staff representing two DFPS regions, four counties, and two CASA programs participated in focus groups.

---

<sup>b</sup> The NYTD survey is administered once every three years to a cohort of teens who are 17 in the year of administration, and follow-up surveys are collected from a sample of the cohort when teens are 19 and 21.

**Analytic Strategy**

We identified the following available measures to compare CASA and no-CASA teen outcomes: completion of PAL training, participation in Extended Foster Care, and reentry into CPS as a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect by age 21. Throughout the report, we present unadjusted values, or raw proportions, for each outcome, except reentry as a perpetrator, which we present as predicted probabilities. For each outcome, we conducted multivariate logistic regressions, controlling for the child and case characteristics listed in Table 3 and incorporating inverse probability weights to account for selection in who is assigned a CASA volunteer, to determine whether outcomes differ significantly by CASA status.

We additionally descriptively analyzed four key aftercare outcomes for the subset of teens with data available at age 19, including education and employment outcomes as well as the rates of teen parents, homelessness, and incarceration. These data provide a look at trends by CASA status, however the sample size is very small (n=70) and we do not know how the sample compares to the full population, limiting our ability to compare outcomes of CASA teens and no-CASA teens. Table 2 describes the quantitative outcomes we assess in this report. We descriptively analyzed Child Connections Survey items and qualitatively coded focus group transcripts and survey short answer items to supplement findings from the administrative data analyses.

**Table 2: During and Aftercare Outcomes**

Outcome	Definition	Source
<b>Completion of PAL Training</b>	Completed five out of six modules, including Financial Management. (Yes/No)	IMPACT
<b>Participation in Extended Foster Care</b>	Participated in Extended Foster Care for a total of at least 1/3/6/9/12 month(s). (Yes/No)	IMPACT
<b>Reentry as Perpetrator or Alleged Perpetrator</b>	Reentered the CPS system on 1) any investigation of abuse or neglect or 2) an investigation with a disposition of “reason to believe” between age 18 and 21. (Yes/No)	IMPACT
<b>Wellbeing at Age 19</b>	At age 19 teen 1) is enrolled in school or employed; 2) obtained a high school diploma/GED; 3) had a child in the past two years; 4) experienced homelessness in the previous two years; or 5) was incarcerated in the previous two years. (Yes/No)	IMPACT (NYTD Survey)

## Sample

The sample for the teen outcomes analysis includes children who entered substitute care between September 1, 2012 and August 31, 2014 and who: A) turned 18 on or before April 30, 2018, or B) were 13 or older at the start of the study period and had a permanency outcome recorded in IMPACT by April 30, 2018.<sup>c</sup> The data for this study are current through November 30, 2018. The final analytic sample includes 4,047 teens (56.4% with a CASA). The focus of the report is on teens who age out of conservatorship, and therefore our outcomes analyses are limited to the 1,460 teens from the analytic sample with a final case outcome of “aged out” (58.6% with a CASA). Table 3 describes the full teen sample as well as the subset of teens who age out.

**Table 3: Characteristics of the Analytic Sample**

Characteristic	Category	Full Sample		Aged Out Sample	
		No-CASA (n = 1,764)	CASA (n = 2,283)	No-CASA (n = 605)	CASA (n = 855)
Gender	Female	55.8%	56.3%	55.2%	55.65%
Race/ethnicity	White	26.0%	39.2%***	24.0%	38.9%***
	African American	20.9%	18.8%	24.0%	21.3%
	Hispanic	48.1%	36.7%***	46.4%	34.9%***
	Other	5.1%	5.2%	5.6%	4.9%
Rural or urban status of last available county	Percent urban	87.4%	82.1%*	89.4%	85.8%*
	Rural	9.2%	14.2%***	8.8%	11.9%
	Out of State/ Missing	3.4%	3.7%	1.8%	2.2%
Most common placement type	Kinship	39.5%	40.4%	16.0%	17.7%
	Foster	19.0%	21.9%*	22.6%	26.8%
	Congregate	23.5%	25.2%	39.8%	37.1%
	Other <sup>^</sup>	17.9%	12.4%***	21.5%	18.5%
Any runaway placements	1 or More	19.2%	17.3%	31.1%	28.3%
PAL eligibility length	Average Months Eligible	N/A	N/A	23.2	26.4***

Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  based on a two-sample proportions test. <sup>^</sup>Other placement types include juvenile justice settings, hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, and runaway or unauthorized placements.

<sup>c</sup> This sample differs from the Child Outcomes study sample in the following ways: 1) We define teens as children who spent time in care as a teen (age 13 to 18), rather than limiting the sample to children 13 or older at removal; 2) We include all siblings from a case rather than randomly selecting one sibling and use a statistical method to account for sibling similarity; and 3) more current data allows for additional teens to reach a permanency outcome, and thus meet the inclusion criteria. The analytic sample is the same as the sample in the November 2018 report with one exception: We exclude nine teens who are missing placement data necessary to calculate “most common placement type”.

We use a subset of the aged out sample to assess aftercare outcomes. To assess reentry into the IMPACT system as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect we use the 803 teens who age out and turn 21 by the end of our data period, allowing three years of observation. For other aftercare outcomes, including education, employment, and parenthood outcomes at age 19, we present data for a sample of 70 teens for whom we have NYTD survey data (54.3% with a CASA). For a more detailed description of the sample and analytic strategy, see the Technical Note in Appendix A.

## Findings

Building on the findings from the November 2018 report on aging out in which we reported that CASA teens are less likely to find permanency than no-CASA teens prior to exiting conservatorship, the purpose of the current report is to learn how CASA serves teens who are preparing to age out of care and examine whether CASA teens are more prepared for adult life and reach better outcomes than teens not served by CASA.

Focus groups with CASA and CPS indicate CASA's practice in serving teens preparing to age out (transition-age teens) varies widely from case to case, but CASA and CPS participants consistently emphasized the value of CASA's involvement in preparing teens to live independently. Key opportunities for CASA support include discussing PAL training, participating in experiential learning, discussing goals and dreams with the teen, and filling in gaps in information as teens make plans for adulthood.

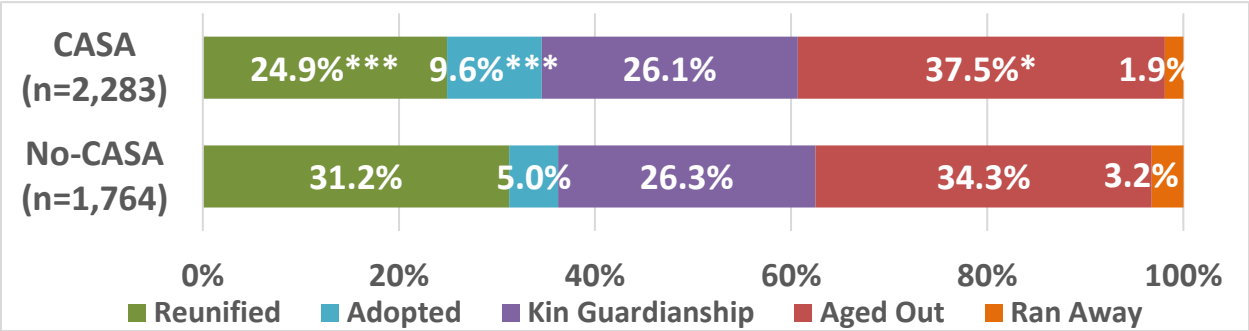
The data available to compare outcomes during and after care between CASA and no-CASA teens are limited. Out of the measures available, CASA and no-CASA teens look similar in their participation in transitional living services and reentry into care as perpetrators of abuse and neglect, though trends indicate CASA teens may reach better outcomes at age 19.

The following section describes in more detail our findings about the unique characteristics of teens who age out, CASA's role in supporting teens in transition, and CASA and no-CASA teens' outcomes during and after care.

### **Nearly four in ten CASA teens age out of conservatorship, and teens who age out tend to have particularly complex needs.**

Among the sample of teens served by CASA (n=4,047), nearly four in ten teens aged out of care (n=1,460), as shown in Figure 1, as compared to reunifying or finding a permanent outcome through adoption or kin guardianship. Examining the characteristics and placement history for teens who age out, we see that teens who age out have particularly complex needs that are important to consider when examining the way that CASA serves them. Specifically, the prevalence of placements that indicate higher-levels of need, runaway episodes, juvenile justice involvement, and teen parenthood among teens who age out indicate that working with transition-age teens requires that CASA volunteers understand the many challenges these teens face and their complex life histories. Characteristics of CASA and no-CASA teens who age out are similar, and we therefore focus on the CASA teens to provide context for CASA volunteers' work.

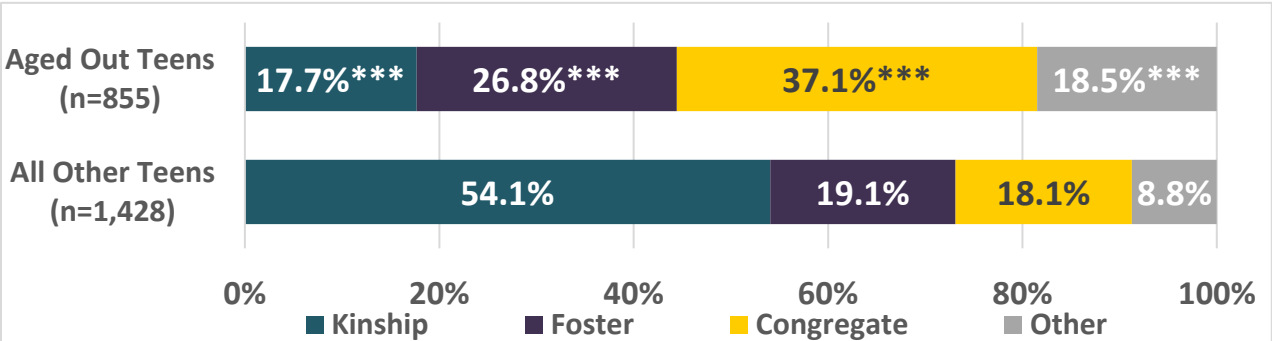
Figure 1: Final Case Outcomes for Teens, by CASA Status (n=4,047)



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001, based on a two-sample proportions test.

Examining the placement types for teens who age out provides insight into their level of need. Kin and foster placements are preferred substitute care placements because they maintain the greatest sense of normalcy for teens. Children and teens are placed in congregate care settings, which primarily include foster group homes and residential treatment centers (RTCs), when their physical or mental health needs prevent them from succeeding in a kin or foster placement. “Other” placements, which include psychiatric hospitals and juvenile justice placements, indicate the highest level of need, and are often used as short term placements for acute issues. Figure 2 displays the most common placement type for CASA teens who age out and all other CASA teens. Fewer than half of teens who age out spend the majority of their time in care as a teen in a kin or foster placement, compared to nearly three-fourths of teens with other outcomes. Nearly four out of ten teens spend the majority of their time in congregate care, such as therapeutic foster group homes or RTCs, and another two in ten are most commonly placed in other specialized placement types, including juvenile detention facilities or psychiatric treatment hospitals. That fewer teens who age out have a most common placement in family-like settings compared to teens with other outcomes indicates that these teens tend to have more complex psychological and/or behavioral issues.

Figure 2: Most Common Placement Types among CASA Teens, by Aging Out vs Other Outcome (n=2,283)



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001 based on a two-sample proportions test.



In addition to commonly living in placements that indicate more complex needs, four in ten teens who age out have at least one documented runaway episode, and 15 percent have some involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, 5.5 percent of female CASA teens are pregnant or parenting while in care.<sup>d</sup> Each of these characteristics represent unique challenges teens in care face, and in turn, circumstances that CASAs should be prepared to provide support for. Looking at the full sample, having a most common placement of congregate care or “other” placement types, at least one runaway episode, juvenile justice involvement, and being pregnant or parenting while in care are each associated with increased odds of aging out of conservatorship, further emphasizing the importance of considering how teens’ unique case characteristics influence the best way to serve them, as well as the best way specifically to support teens to prepare to live independently in the event that they age out of conservatorship.

**Four in ten teens who age out have at least one documented runaway episode, and 15 percent have some involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, 5.5 percent of female CASA teens are pregnant or parenting while in care.**

Though many CASA volunteers provided examples of ways that they work with teens to overcome the challenges the teens face, some CASAs discussed their work with teens in a way that reveals a lack of understanding of teens’ complex histories of trauma. For example, teens in care are likely working through past experiences of abuse or neglect, while also worrying about whether they will have to move to a new placement. These challenges may make it hard for teens

to focus in school or plan ahead for a future that may still be several years away. Many CASA volunteers seemed to deeply understand and empathize with these challenges and plan their work accordingly. However, other CASA volunteers expressed frustration that the teens they work with do not prepare for their future or maintain the same responsible behavior they see from other teenagers they know who are not in CPS care. Ensuring that all CASA volunteers who work with teens understand the trauma histories of teens in care and are equipped to support teens with unique needs will help ensure that CASA is best serving teens.

### **CPS and CASA emphasize the importance of CASA’s encouragement to complete services and participation in experiential learning to teens preparing to age out, though CASA involvement varies widely case to case.**

CASA and CPS focus group participants generally agreed upon a number of important ways that CASA volunteers can support teens preparing to age out, including encouraging participation in PAL training, discussing PAL training content, participating in experiential learning, mentoring the teen, and providing transportation. Additionally, CASA volunteers can monitor the receipt of transitional living services to prevent gaps in knowledge and services to the teen. Key activities

<sup>d</sup> We exclude male teens from this calculation because we believe it is likely that CPS caseworkers may not be aware if a male is a teen parent. Data do not indicate whether a child is born as a result of a pregnancy, whether the teen has custody of the child, or when a pregnancy occurs, though it appears most teens are already pregnant or parenting prior to entering care.

are summarized in Table 4. Despite numerous opportunities for CASAs to provide support, discussion with CPS and CASA showed that some CASA volunteers are much more informed and involved than others. Understanding variation in practices and perspectives among CASA volunteers can help Texas CASA and CASA programs to better equip volunteers to serve teens and provide potential explanations for differences in outcomes between CASA and no-CASA teens

**Table 4: CASA Activities to Support Transition-Age Teens**

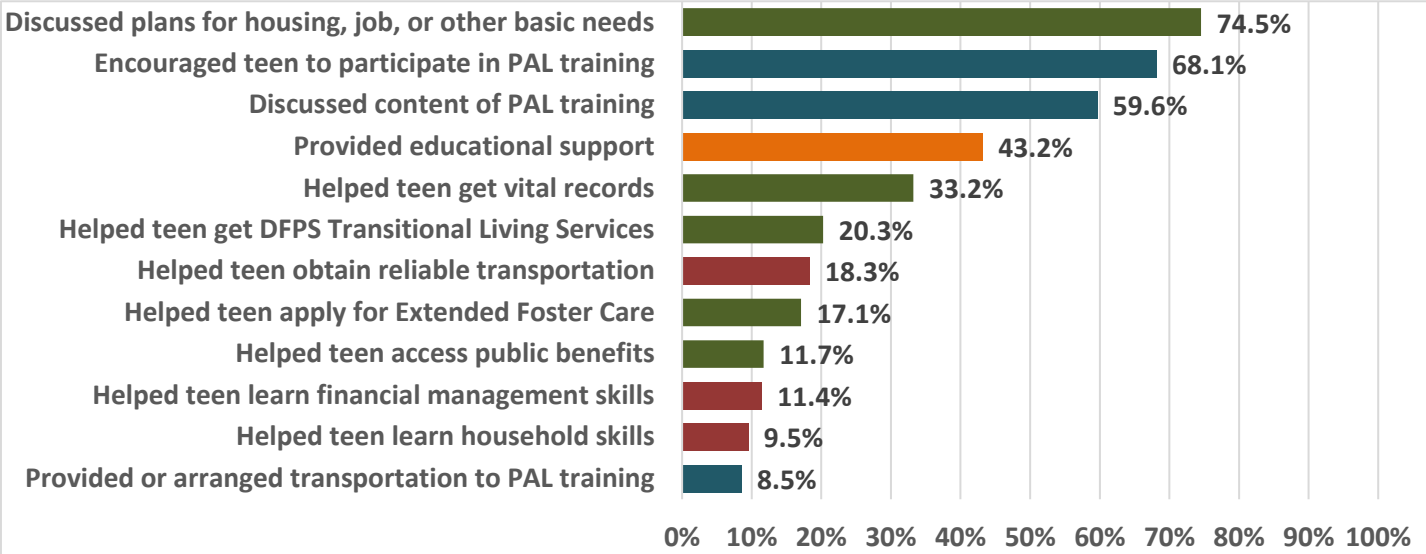
Type of Support	Examples
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checking in on high school performance/ if teen is on track to graduate</li> <li>• Ensuring the teen knows the many steps to apply to college or a job training program (e.g., campus tour, SATs, FAFSA)</li> </ul>
PAL Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging the teen to participate</li> <li>• Discussing content and assessing comprehension</li> <li>• Completing PAL training one-on-one with the teen, if needed</li> </ul>
Encouragement/ Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping the teen to set goals</li> <li>• Build confidence/ self-worth</li> <li>• Discussing safe and healthy relationships</li> </ul>
Transition Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging teen to participate in Extended Foster Care</li> <li>• Discussing transition plan for housing, employment, etc</li> <li>• Attending Circle of Support Meetings</li> <li>• Encouraging the teen to participate in case management with the regional contractor &amp; attending with the teen</li> <li>• Ensuring the teen has all vital records and has Medicaid set up and knows requirements (e.g., update address or risk losing coverage)</li> </ul>
Experiential Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grocery shopping or cooking</li> <li>• Opening a bank account and practicing budgeting</li> <li>• Looking for an apartment</li> <li>• Ensuring the teen can obtain driver’s license and practice driving</li> </ul>

One important way that CASA volunteers can contribute to a teen’s transition planning is by encouraging the teen to attend PAL training. CASA volunteers often described reinforcing the importance of making plans and discussing PAL training content, which CPS staff emphasized is an important role for CASA volunteers. On the Child Connections Survey, 60 percent or more of CASA volunteers reported that they supported their most recent teen by discussing PAL training, encouraging PAL training participation, and discussing plans for meeting basic needs after aging out, indicating that these are common roles for CASA volunteers (see Figure 3).

The experiential learning component of PAL includes working with the teen to ensure they know practical, everyday life skills for adulthood, such as cooking, cleaning the kitchen, grocery shopping, paying bills, and attending medical appointments. Caregivers are responsible for ensuring teens have sufficient experiential training opportunities. DFPS does not track exactly

what information a teen receives in this area, so we cannot assess the extent to which teens participate in experiential learning opportunities. CPS caseworkers reported that sometimes the experiential learning opportunities provided by foster parents, however, are inadequate, and CASA support in this area can be invaluable. Experiential learning is time-intensive and it is difficult for caseworkers to fill in this gap if they feel the foster parent is not completing this responsibility. CPS caseworkers provided examples of CASA volunteers who took teens grocery shopping, to the bank, and helped them learn to cook, but noted that CASAs who participate in this way are exceptional CASAs, this is not standard practice. As shown in Figure 3, approximately one in ten CASA volunteers reported participating in experiential learning with the teen, indicating there is space for increased involvement in this area.

**Figure 3: Proportion of CASAs Who Reported Providing Aging Out Support (n=320)**



Source: Child Connections Survey, 2019. Note: Colors correspond to the activity categories outlined in Table 4. Education=orange; PAL training=teal; transition planning=green; experiential learning= red.

CASA and CPS focus group participants agreed that one barrier to CASA support for transition-age teens is the lack of ability for CASA volunteers to transport teens at some CASA programs. Sometimes it is difficult to find a teen transportation to PAL training or other services, and it is helpful when CASA can step in to transport. Additionally, CASA volunteers named many activities that they would like to do with the teens they serve, specifically to be more involved in experiential learning, such as visiting college campuses, going to the bank, going shopping and out to eat, and visiting with siblings or other relatives. The fact that they cannot transport the teens, however, makes these activities nearly impossible.

**“CASAs are unable to transport...we are...muted in our ability to offer additional resources such as touring a college campus or exposure to adult living tasks such as opening a checking account or driving them to a job interview.”**  
 -CASA Volunteer

CASA volunteers also described that they focus on helping to build teens' self-confidence and guiding teens to think about their hopes and dreams for life. They also then fill in important practical information for teens. For example, CASAs described making sure teens are informed about everyday adult responsibilities, such as whether they need to complete an income tax return if they have a part time job and ensuring that the teens sign up for the SATs if they plan to attend college. Volunteers noted that there are so many tidbits of information that teens need to know that the different CPS service providers might not cover. CASA volunteers also described filling in gaps between the conservatorship caseworker and the PAL caseworker, noting that sometimes information can get lost in between workers. Particularly when a teen changes placements often or moves from one region to another, CASAs noted, CPS staff can sometimes miss out on important information about the teen, such as which components of PAL training the teen needs to complete. In addition to filling in gaps in information and making sure the teen receives needed services, one-third of CASA volunteers reported helping teens obtain their vital records, such as a birth certificate or social security card. CPS staff agreed that it is very helpful when CASAs fill in information gaps and support the teen to complete services, but generally cautioned that it makes casework more difficult if a CASA volunteer crosses the boundary and tries to step into a case management role. CPS staff consistently emphasized their appreciation for the support and teamwork of CASAs who are actively involved with the teens they work with, but stressed the importance of clear boundaries between roles, communication, and mutual respect to maintain a positive working relationship.

### CASA Spotlight: Training Volunteers to Support Aging Out Youth

"I do offer a continuing ed training for our advocates...I like to utilize different people and resources within the community, because I feel like the more we are able to share with our advocates, the more that they are able to share with the youth and really try to help the youth... We bring in Circles of Support [staff]. We bring in PAL [staff]...We brought in juvenile department, police department, juvenile attorneys, because clearly a lot of our youth come across that. We've brought in some of our local transitional living programs that are resources for kids after they leave care. So, I try to build that curriculum to really just provide that information to our advocates, and they can chose to participate in it if they want to. I also try to sit down with advocates...individually, because a lot of times, there are very individualized circumstances. So, while my training is very broad and provides resources that are general, a lot of times there's very specific things and specific needs for kids. I try to provide that as an opportunity to support the supervisors in those cases, as well."

-CASA Staff

Despite the numerous ways that CASA volunteers can support teens preparing to age out, we find that the roles CASAs play varies considerably between different volunteers and across programs, and overall the role of CASA is not well defined in terms of supporting teens. CPS caseworkers noted that though they've all had CASA volunteers provide a lot of support for teens, CASAs are typically not heavily involved in this area, and sometimes are even taken off of cases once teens reach PMC. Similarly, CASA volunteers demonstrate varying levels of knowledge about the PAL program and the transition process during focus groups. For example, some CASA volunteers described visiting the local case management provider to learn more about the available services and eligibility, but other CASA volunteers were not even aware that these services exist. Some programs have developed trainings and provide extensive staff support to ensure that CASA volunteers are informed about the transition process. At other programs, however, volunteers seem frustrated and unaware about how to learn more about the transition process.

Similar to the variation in CASA volunteer practices, volunteers also shared differing perspectives on which permanency options are best for teens. Though many CASA volunteers described prioritizing safe and stable homes with kin or through adoption, some CASA volunteers believe that sometimes aging out is preferable over other permanency options. CASA and CPS both noted that sometimes CASA might encourage a teen to remain in care rather than move into a permanent placement in order to maintain access to transitional living services. In contrast, CPS and other CASAs noted that although remaining in care to obtain more services could be reasonable if the teen was within six months or perhaps even a year of aging out, the financial benefits associated with aging out do not outweigh the benefits of reaching permanency. Both CASA and CPS also acknowledged that teens themselves may advocate for aging out over a permanency option, specifically if the teen plans to return to her parents once she ages out. Older children are more likely to express their preference regarding permanency options, which is an additional component of working with teens that is unique compared to working with younger children.

In addition to sometimes advocating for aging out over permanency in order to obtain transitional living services, several CASA volunteers provided examples of times when they recommended against a permanent placement for the teens they served because the

### CASA Spotlight: Experiential Learning

"I took her to get a bank account. I took her to replace her social security card...help with FAFSA, help for applying for those. It seems like, oh yeah, here's the information. Do it. No, I'm going to help you. 'Here's the doctor. This is what you say. I'm going to take you.' We're at the doctor, and I'm showing you how to fill the forms out, because that's really overwhelming. 'Here's your medical history, and these are the type of things that they're asking, and that's why you need to know this'...But what 16, 17, 18 year old can just go and be like...'I'm going to set up a doctor's appointment, and call and change my primary care provider because I have to have a primary care provider [for my insurance]? I have to know how to find a doctor in my area that's on my bus route, because I don't have a car, and the people I live with don't have a car'...It's doesn't feel very good to expect that, and then, be upset or frustrated with them, when they can't figure it out."

-CASA Volunteer

placement was not “good enough”. For example, one CASA volunteer described recommending against an adoptive placement for a teen with his younger siblings because she felt the adoptive parents only wanted the younger siblings and were not truly invested in the teen. Similarly, another CASA questioned whether aging out was really worse than living with kin who might have trouble paying rent, and one CASA volunteer described why she felt outcomes among CASA teens might look different than outcomes among no-CASA teens:

*“I think you're also gonna find that if you've got a CASA advocate looking over one of these kids, what I see is most of the people I've gotten to know, they don't want these kids to go back to the parents that put them in the system, whereas CPS is always wanting reunification. I think you've got more people working towards this child having a better life than going back with their parents.”*

The views and anecdotes expressed during focus groups indicate that some CASA volunteers are out of touch with the legal standards for prioritizing permanency, as well as how difficult it is to find placements and adoptive homes for teens in care, and provides a potential explanation as to why fewer CASA teens reach permanency compared to their peers.

The differing views on what constitutes an appropriate placement as well as the variation in knowledge and involvement among CASA volunteers in the preparation for adult living process indicates a need for CASA programs to ensure all volunteers who work with older teens are equipped to assess teens’ best interest and have an in-depth understanding of the landscape of transitional living services in their area.

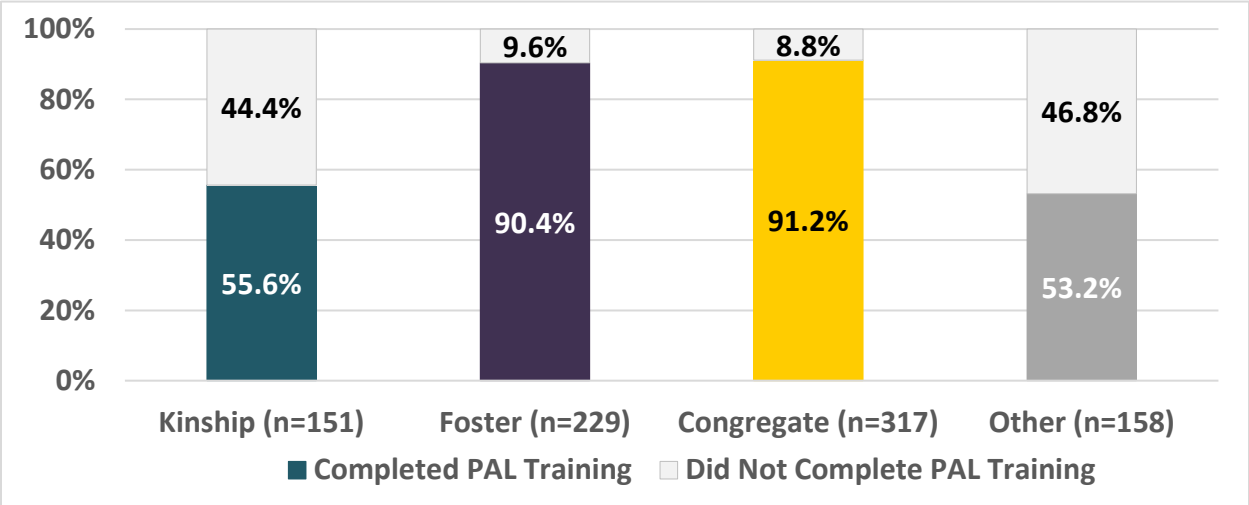
### **Three out of four teens complete PAL training. Teens primarily in kin or “other” placements are less likely to complete PAL training than teens in foster placements, and completion is similar by CASA status.**

In addition to examining the ways that CASA volunteers support teens preparing to age out, a primary goal of the current study is to assess whether CASA teens are more prepared for adulthood than no-CASA teens when they leave care. Unfortunately, the data collected and stored in IMPACT pertaining to teens’ preparation for independence are extremely limited. No measures exist that could tell us how prepared teens are when they age out, and one of the only ways to assess the receipt of transitional living services through IMPACT is to assess participation in PAL training.

We assessed PAL training participation by comparing PAL training completion rates between similar CASA teens and no-CASA teens. Approximately three-fourths of teens complete PAL training, with no significant difference by CASA status (not shown). An additional five percent of teens begin, but do not complete PAL training. Though most teens complete PAL training, several teen characteristics are associated with aging out *without* completing PAL training, and understanding these characteristics can help CASA volunteers understand if the teens they serve are at risk of not completing PAL training.

Placement type is an important predictor of PAL training completion. Compared to teens who primarily live in foster placements, teens who spend the majority of time in care in “other” placements have three times greater odds of aging out without completing PAL. Similarly, teens who spend the majority of their time in care as a teen in a kinship placement are 4.4 times less likely to complete PAL. Figure 4 demonstrates the vast differences in PAL completion rates for CASA teens by most common placement. More than 90 percent of teens who spend most of their time in foster or congregate placements complete PAL training, compared to fewer than 60 percent of teens who spend most of their time in “other” or kinship placements.

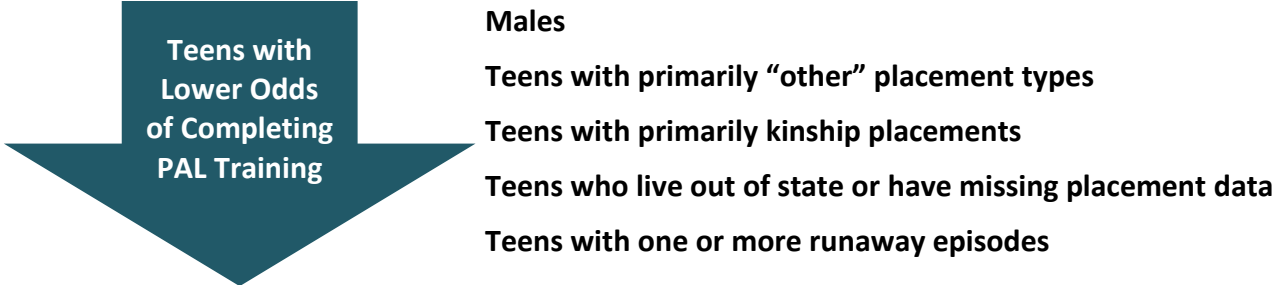
Figure 4: PAL Completion Among CASA Teens by Most Common Placement (n = 855)



Source: C IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. PAL completion rates for no-CASA teens by most placement type are similar to completion rates for CASA teens.

The geographic location of placements also influences completion of PAL training. Teens whose last placement was out of state or in a placement in which the geographic location is missing have four times greater odds of exiting care without completing PAL than teens in an urban county. Though focus group participants sometimes noted that living in a rural area or an area further from the main city in the DFPS region, where PAL trainings tend to take place, can make it more challenging to ensure teens complete PAL, teens whose last placement is in a rural county were not statistically less likely to complete PAL than teens who lived in urban counties. Lastly, gender influences the odds of PAL completion; males have more than 70 percent greater odds of aging out without completing PAL compared to females. Figure 5 summarizes the characteristics associated with exiting care without completing PAL.

Figure 5: Characteristics That Reduce the Odds of Completing PAL Training Prior to Aging Out



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: See Appendix B for the multivariate logistic regression output and complete list of teen characteristics.

Assessing the extent to which teens complete PAL training provides a measure of whether teens obtain the services they should receive before aging out, but does not necessarily tell us whether that teen is prepared for adult life. In fact, though PAL training provides a foundation of information that teens need to live independently, focus group participants highlighted important weaknesses of PAL training. First, some participants feel that PAL training occurs too early for many teens, and teens are not ready to seriously think about and plan for adulthood at the time they complete training. Participants noted that components of the PAL training curriculum are outdated or irrelevant to the teens’ early adulthood period, and the classroom-based setting is not very engaging for teens. Another issue that CPS and CASA discussed during focus groups is that to teens, the \$1,000 provided to teens who age out and completed PAL training feels like an enormous sum of money to the teens and teens do not realize how quickly \$1,000 is spent in adult life. Focus group participants cautioned against emphasizing the monetary benefits with teens because it distracts them from learning and planning during PAL training.

“And I think it is good that they're getting exposed to this information early on [during PAL training], but I think it needs to be something that's repetitive, and more hands on, so that they do have that experience. Someone that's 16, who is maybe in a stable placement or bouncing around, their focus is not on 'where am I going to be at 18?'...So, I think starting them early is always good, but just being able to consistently provide that information and opportunities to learn.”  
 -CASA Staff

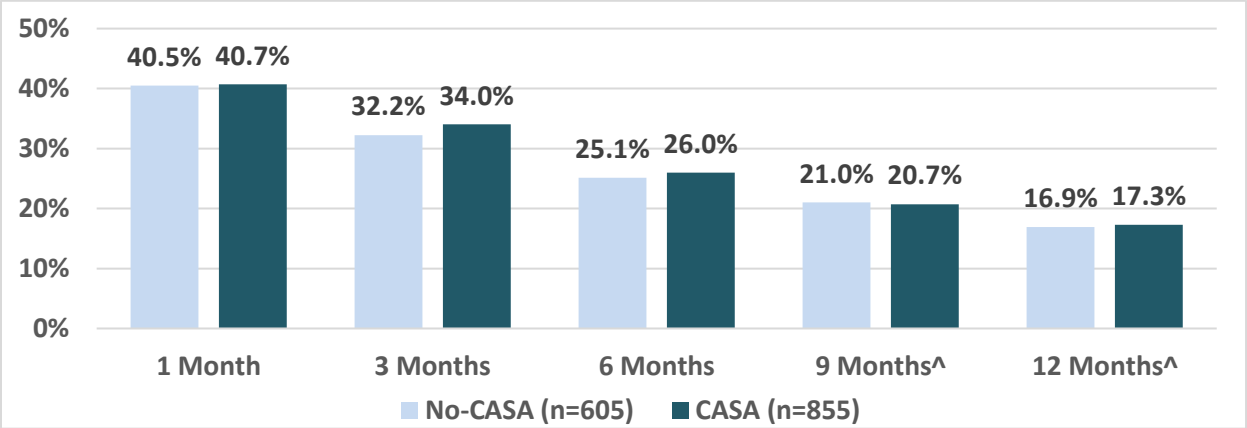
Overall, PAL training is just one measure of preparation for adulthood, and the extent to which PAL training prepares teens for independence is unclear. However, supporting teens to attend PAL training to obtain a foundation of knowledge about adult living is an important role CASA can play with the teens they serve, and understanding the teen characteristics associated with PAL completion can help CASA volunteers identify whether teens they serve are at risk for aging out without completing PAL training.



**Approximately one-third of teens who age out spend at least three months in Extended Foster Care. Teens with mostly foster placements are more likely to participate than teens with “other” placements, but participation is similar among CASA and no-CASA teens.**

One important way that the state supports teens who age out is by offering the opportunity for eligible teens to remain in paid foster care until age 21, with the goal of providing stability and improving outcomes for teens as they transition to independence.<sup>e</sup> Focus group participants emphasized that Extended Foster Care is an important tool to make it easier for teens to attend college or adjust to adult employment, and is particularly helpful for teens who are not ready to take active steps to prepare for independent living before they turn 18. CASA and CPS participants both emphasized that they encourage teens to remain in care after 18, though teens are often uninterested. Teens can also leave care, but return to care if a placement is available, which focus group participants find is a common phenomenon; teens think that they want to be independent and leave care at 18, but find that supporting themselves is more difficult than they anticipated and they decide to return to care.

**Figure 6: Length of Participation in Extended Foster Care, by CASA Status (n=1,460)**



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001 based on a multivariate logistic regression. <sup>^</sup>Not all teens have been out of care for more than 6 months. At 9 Months, n=1425 (CASA n= 835; no-CASA n=590). At 12 months, n=1384 (CASA n=804; no-CASA n=580). Graph shows the proportion of teens who participate in Extended Foster Care for a total length of time equaling at least 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 9 months, and 12 months.

We compare CASA and no-CASA teen participation in Extended Foster Care by measuring the total length of time teens spend in Extended Foster Care placements.<sup>f</sup> The vast majority of teens who participate in Extended Foster Care remain in care for less than one year, and

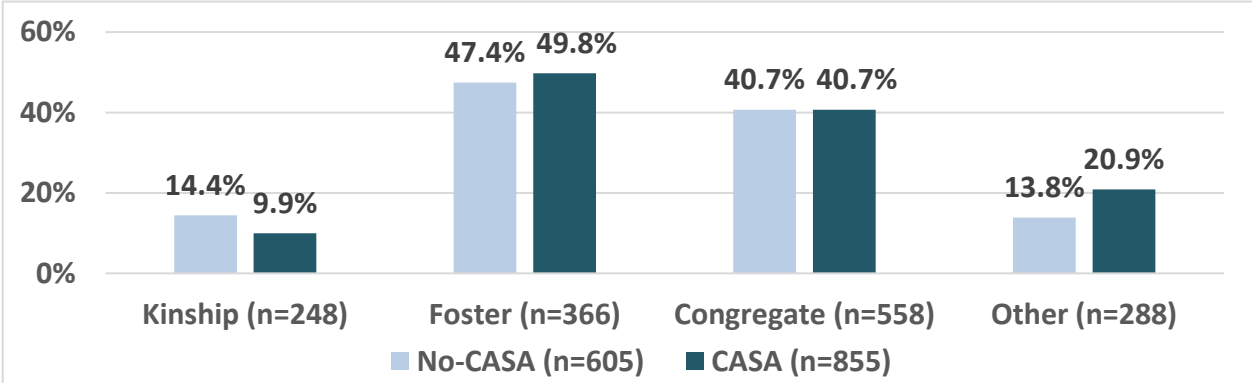
<sup>e</sup> Information on eligibility requirements for Extended Foster Care can be found in the CPS Handbook, CPS 10420

<sup>f</sup> Specifically, we measure Extended Foster Care participation by counting the number of days spent in paid placements after a teen’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

participation rates are similar across time points for CASA and no-CASA teens. Participation gradually decreases over time, with four in ten teens spending a total of one month in Extended Foster Care and one-quarter of teens spending at least six months in Extended Foster Care. Approximately one in six teens spend a total of one year or more in Extended Foster Care. Figure 6 shows participation rates at different time points up to one year by CASA status.

Participation in Extended Foster Care varies significantly by a teen’s most common placement. Four in ten teens who spend most of their time as a teen in congregate care spend at least three months in Extended Foster Care, and nearly half of teens most commonly in foster placements spend at least three months in care after age 18. In stark contrast, fewer than one in five teens who spend most of their time in “other” placements spend at least three months in Extended Foster Care. Very few teens who most commonly live in kin placements participate in Extended Foster Care for at least three months, however, this is not surprising given that many teens may continue living in their kin placement after they turn 18, and because kin placements are not paid DFPS placements, this would not be considered Extended Foster Care.

**Figure 7: Three-Month Participation in Extended Foster Care, by Most Common Placement and CASA Status (n=1,460)**



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data.

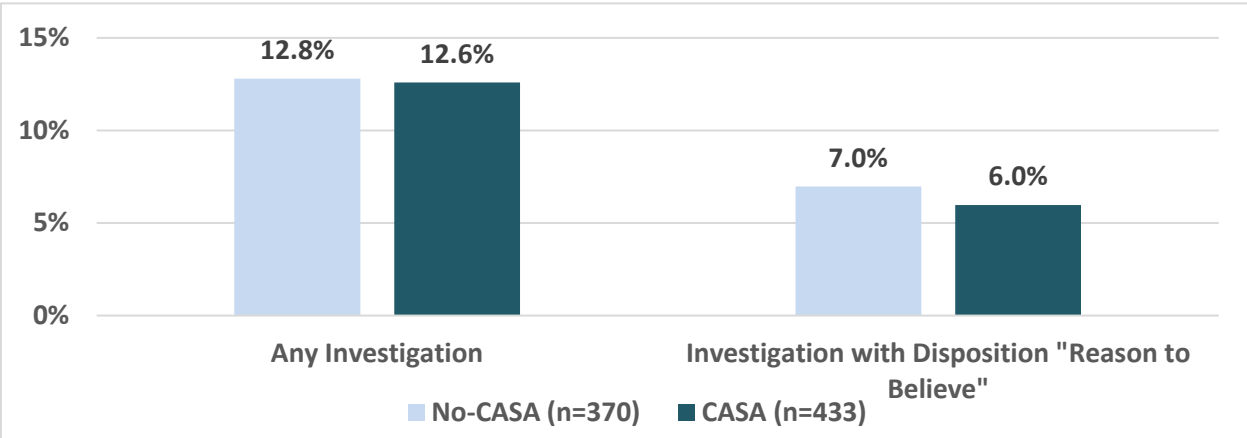
Focus group participants provided context for the differences in Extended Foster Care participation by most common placement. CPS staff described that a teen’s ability to participate in Extended Foster Care is contingent on placement availability, and few placements are available for teens with complex case and behavioral histories. Specifically, child placing agencies may place restrictions on their foster homes restricting continued placement after age 18 for teens with history of mental health or juvenile justice issues. Additionally, if teens run away or “break their placement” in any way after 18, the consequence may be that they are unable to return to care because no other placements are available for them. CPS staff reported that foster parents are also less likely to agree to an Extended Foster Care placement for a teen when they have a history of juvenile justice involvement, runaway episodes, or mental health issues. Overall, it is possible that teens with many “other” type placements are less likely to want to participate in Extended Foster Care, but limitations in available placements likely also play a role.

**CASA teens re-enter the system as perpetrators of abuse or neglect at similar rates as no-CASA teens.**

In addition to determining whether CASA teens are more prepared for adult life than no-CASA teens, another objective for the study was to assess the extent to which CASA teens who age out reach better outcomes after care than teens not served by CASA. Unfortunately, only very limited data exist on teens once they exit care, and therefore our ability to assess aftercare outcomes is very limited.

One outcome we can track in IMPACT is whether teens re-enter the system as perpetrators of abuse or neglect. Approximately 13 percent of teens in the aged out sample re-enter CPS records between the ages of 18 and 21 as part of an investigation of abuse or neglect. Approximately seven percent of teens re-enter on an investigation with a disposition of “reason to believe” within three years of turning 18. Rates of investigation and rates of “reason to believe” dispositions are similar between CASA teens and no-CASA teens, as shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Predicted Probability of Reentry as a Perpetrator Within Three Years of Aging Out (n=803)**

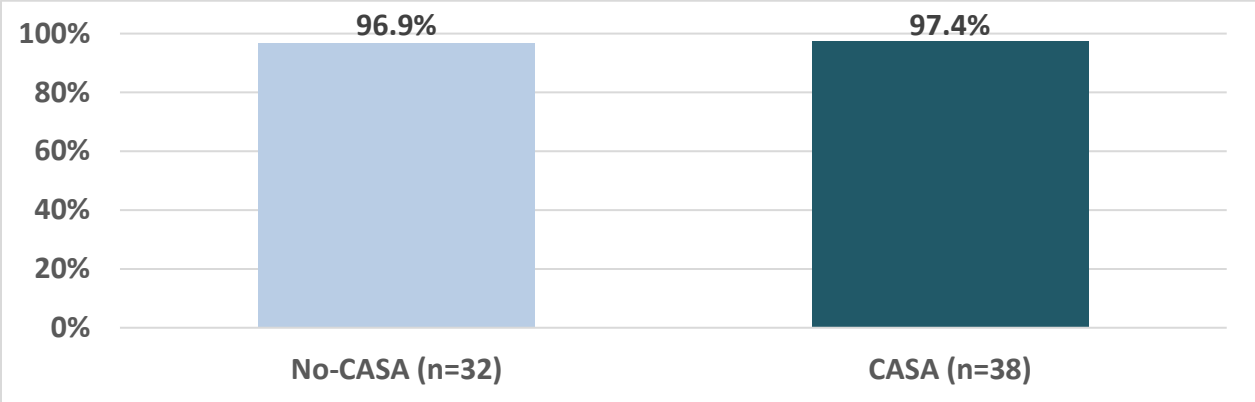


Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001 based on a multivariate logistic regression.

**Trends indicate CASA teens may fare better at age 19 on education, employment, and stability outcomes.**

Outcomes from the NYTD survey provide insight on how teens are doing at age 19 across a variety of educational, employment, and wellbeing outcomes, but the survey administration schedule limits the number of teens for whom we have data. We cannot know how the outcomes of teen survey respondents compare to all teens in our sample, and therefore NYTD data provide a limited snapshot of teen outcomes and should be interpreted with caution.

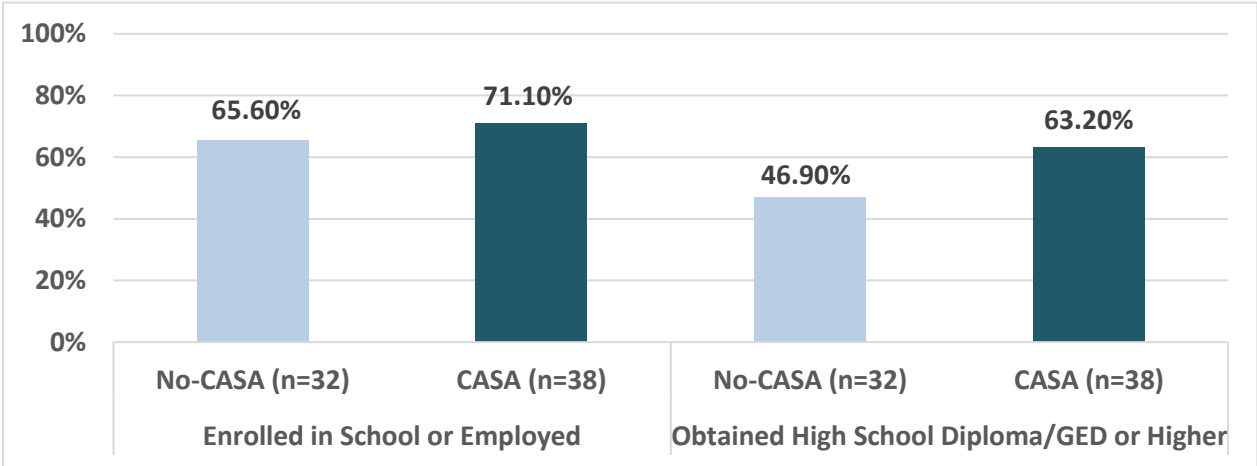
Figure 9: NYTD Teens with One or More Adult Connections at Age 19, by CASA Status (n=70)



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data.

Maintaining a supportive adult connection can promote a more successful transition to adulthood for aging out teens.<sup>8</sup> At 19 years old, more than 95 percent of both CASA and no-CASA teens report having at least one supportive adult connection (as shown in Figure 9), indicating that the vast majority of young adults feel that they have some level of support system.

Figure 10: NYTD Education and Employment Outcomes at Age 19, by CASA Status (n=70)

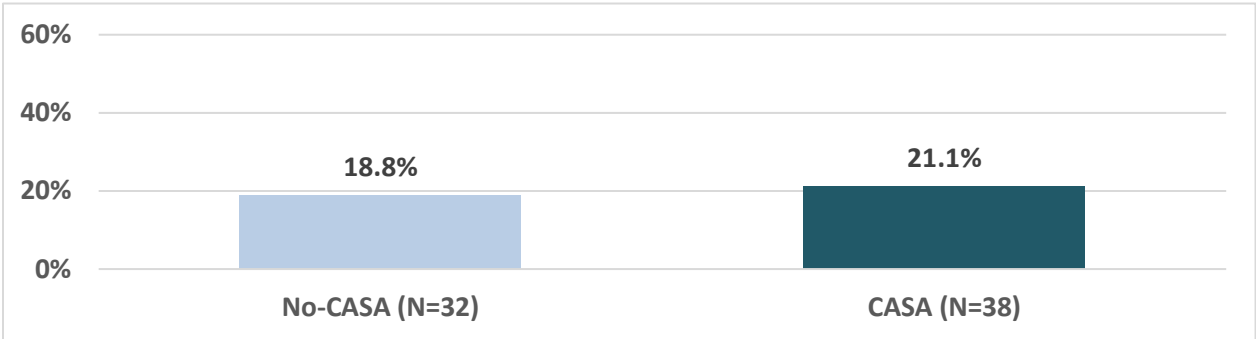


Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data.

Employment, education, and wellbeing outcomes diverge between CASA and no-CASA teens at age 19. Seven out of ten CASA teens report that they are either enrolled in school or employed at 19, compared to just under two-thirds of no-CASA teens. Nearly two-thirds of CASA teens report that they have attained at least a high school diploma or GED, compared to under half of no-CASA teens (see Figure 10). Among the entire first cohort of NYTD survey respondents (n=7,845), 55 percent of teens reported having a high school diploma by age 19, placing the national rate in between the CASA and no-CASA teens in our sample.<sup>9</sup>

The NYTD survey also asks teens to report whether they have had any children in the past two years. At age 19, one in five teens report that they have given birth or fathered a child in the past two years, and CASA and no-CASA teen rates of childbearing are similar. Among the national sample, only 12 percent of teens report having a child in the past two years, indicating that more teens in our sample report having children, regardless of CASA status.<sup>10</sup> Given that Texas has the fourth highest teen pregnancy rate in the United States, a somewhat higher rate among our sample compared to the national sample is not surprising.

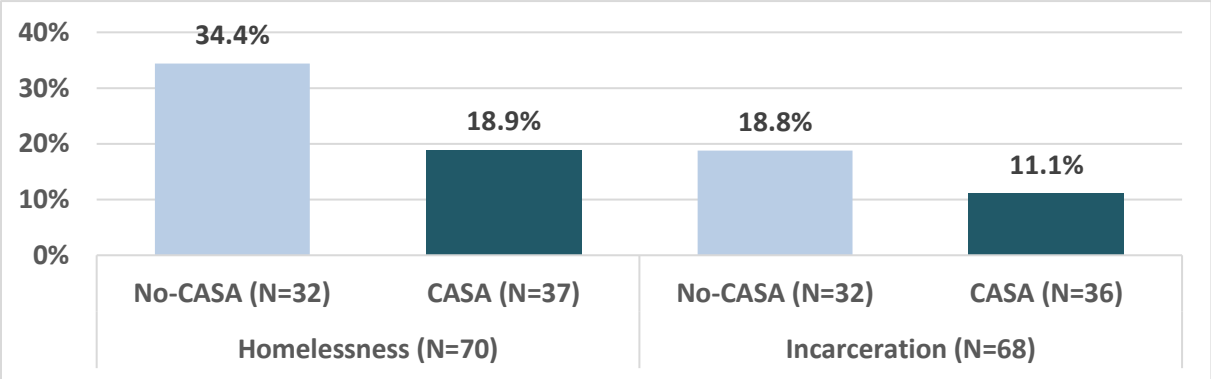
Figure 11: NYTD Reported Having Children in the Past Two Years, by CASA Status (n = 70)



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data.

The NYTD survey additionally asks participants to report whether they have experienced homelessness or incarceration in the past two years. Somewhat fewer CASA teens report incarceration (19% of CASA teens compared to 34% of no-CASA teens), and almost half as many CASA teens (11%) report experiencing homelessness than no-CASA teens (19%). Approximately 20 percent of teens in the national sample reported homelessness within the past two years, indicating that the national sample looks more similar to the CASA group for this outcome. Nearly one-quarter of teens in the national sample report incarceration in the past two years, indicating that both CASA and no-CASA teen incarceration rates are somewhat below the national rate at age 19.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 12: NYTD Homelessness or Incarceration in Last Two Years, by CASA Status (n = 70)



Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data.

Overall, trends indicate CASA teens may reach better outcomes than no-CASA teens at age 19. CASA volunteers emphasized supporting teens in transition to set goals and plan for their transition, and it is possible that CASA support serves as a protective factor in ensuring teens have a safe place to stay and pursue their employment and educational goals in early adulthood.

### Conclusion

Given that teens with a CASA are more likely to age out of conservatorship than their peers without a CASA, our goal was to determine whether CASA teens who age out are more prepared for adulthood and reach better outcomes during and after care than their counterparts without a CASA. However, limited data are maintained in IMPACT that provide meaningful measures of preparedness or teen outcomes either during or after care. Across available measures, including completion of PAL training, participation in Extended Foster Care, and reentry into CPS as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect, CASA teens and no-CASA teens look similar. Among a small follow-up sample at age 19, CASA teens look somewhat better across employment, education, and wellbeing outcomes, but we do not have any of these aftercare measures for the full sample. Additional measures are needed to truly understand teens' preparedness for adult life.

To supplement our understanding of teen preparedness for adult life and aftercare outcomes, we present findings from focus groups with CASA and CPS, as well as survey items from CASA volunteers assessing the context for CASA's work with transition-age teens, current CASA practices, and practices that CASA volunteers, CASA staff, and CPS staff find valuable for CASA volunteers to participate in with teens.

Importantly, CASA and CPS focus group participants consistently emphasized value in CASA's involvement in preparing teens to transition to adulthood. Key ways that CASA volunteers can support transition-age teens include discussing and encouraging PAL training, goal-setting with the teen, and ensuring the teen has sufficient opportunities to practice adult living skills. Actual CASA practices, however, vary by CASA volunteer, and CPS staff reported that CASA volunteers are often not very involved or informed in the process. Approximately one in ten CASA volunteers reported participating in experiential learning, such as helping the teen learn to cook, buy groceries, or use a bank, yet this is one of the most important areas for CASA support from CPS staff's perspective, indicating that this is an important area for increased CASA involvement.

CASA volunteers' knowledge of transitional living services and the aging out process seem to vary widely across CASAs and by program as well. For example, CASAs at one program

**"I spoke to her about how to make a budget and live within her means (don't spend more than you have coming in). Nutrition, positive choices when it comes to friends and how to stay away from people that are troublemakers. I asked her about her passion and counseled her to focus on her passions to look for jobs in those areas...I encouraged her to balance her life with good friends and times that don't take much money and also to exercise for mental and health reasons."**

**-CASA Volunteer**

discussed attending trainings at their local program designed specifically to inform them about transitional living services and help them best serve teens, but at another program, CASAs expressed frustration and anxiety about not knowing how to learn about the aging out process.

In addition to knowledge of the services and resources available to transition-age teens, it is important for CASA volunteers to approach their work with teens mindful of the complex histories and needs of the teens they work with. CASA volunteers who deeply understand the trauma histories of teens in CPS care and who are informed about the services and resources available to teens who age out of care are most equipped to provide both emotional support and practical guidance to teens during their vulnerable time of transition. Our findings indicate that there are numerous opportunities for CASA volunteers to get more involved not just in discussing plans and services with teens, but in participating in experiential learning activities and becoming more informed on the details of the transition process and services available locally. CASA programs can support volunteers by developing trainings and providing guidance on the aging out process, ensuring volunteers have accurate information on services and resources, and helping volunteers learn from one another about how to best serve teens.

## Appendix A: Technical Note

### Data Sources and Analytic Strategy

We conducted a mixed-methods study to compare during and aftercare outcomes of CASA and no-CASA teens and understand current CASA practice and opportunities for growth in CASA’s service to teens. Our approach incorporates administrative data supplemented by focus group and survey data to allow us to understand both teen outcomes and the broader context in which teens in care live and in which CASA serves teens.

#### Participation in Services and Reentry as a Perpetrator

Given limitations in the data available on receipt of transitional living services and the lack of data available for teens after they exit conservatorship, we identified three during and aftercare outcomes for which we could compare the full sample of CASA and no-CASA teens who age out: completion of PAL training, participation in Extended Foster Care, and reentry into CPS as a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect by age 21. For each outcome, we conduct multivariate logistic regressions, controlling for the child and case characteristics listed in Table 5 and using inverse probability weights to account for selection effects in who is assigned a CASA, to determine whether outcomes differed significantly by CASA status. Throughout the report, we present unadjusted values, or raw proportions, for each outcome, except reentry as a perpetrator, which is presented as predicted probabilities.

**Table 5: Child and Cases Characteristic Measures**

Control Variable	Definition
<b>Gender</b>	Teen’s gender (Male or Female)
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	Teen’s race/ethnicity (“White,” “African-American,” “Hispanic,” or “Other”).
<b>Rural or urban status of last available county</b>	Status of county the youth’s last placement according to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (urban, rural, out of state/missing). County of previous placement was substituted if last placement was runaway or otherwise had no county information.
<b>Most common placement type</b>	The type of placement in which the youth spent the greatest percentage of their teen years during the focal stage (“kinship,” “foster,” “congregate care,” “other” <sup>b</sup> ).
<b>Any runaway placements</b>	Teen had any runaway placements (no runaway placements, one or more runaway placements)
<b>PAL eligibility length<sup>a</sup></b>	Months eligible to receive PAL training, with starting their 14 <sup>th</sup> birthday or stage start (if after 14 <sup>th</sup> birthday) and ending at 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday.

Note: <sup>a</sup> Included in model predicting PAL training completion. <sup>b</sup> Other placement types include juvenile justice settings, hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, and runaway or unauthorized placements.



***NYTD Aftercare Outcomes***

IMPACT does not track teen outcomes after teens leave care, with the exception of a small subset of teens who are included in a NYTD cohort. The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects data on teens who turn 17 during a cohort year (once every three years) and surveys a sample of these teens again at 19 and 21. We descriptively analyze four key aftercare outcomes for the subset of teens with data available at age 19 ( $n = 70$ ), including education and employment outcomes as well as the rates of teen parents, homelessness, and incarceration. These data provide a look at early trends by CASA status, however the sample size is very small and we do not know how the sample compares to the full population. The sample is also too small to control for any child or case characteristics, limiting our ability to compare outcomes of CASA teens and no-CASA teens.

***Descriptive and Qualitative Data on CASA Practices***

We descriptively analyze items assessing CASA volunteer's typical practices working with older teens from the Child Connections Survey ( $n=320$ ) and qualitatively coded focus group transcripts conducted with CASA volunteers, CASA staff, and CPS staff, as well as Child Connections Survey short answer items to supplement findings from the administrative data analyses and help us better understand current CASA practices and the broader context for teen outcomes and the process of transitioning to adulthood.

**Sample**

The sample for the current study is comprised of children from the original Child Outcomes and Volunteer Effectiveness (COVE) population who either turned 18 on or before April 30, 2018 or were 13 or older at the start of the study period and had a recorded permanency outcome in IMPACT by April 30, 2018. The COVE population included children who entered substitute care between September 1, 2012 and August 31, 2014 in jurisdictions covered by one of the 68 CASA programs in Texas that provided a usable roster of the children they served during the study timeframe. Three programs did not provide usable rosters.

We excluded children from the population who had unexplained gaps in Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC) status ( $n=8$ ), who transitioned from Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) to TMC ( $n=2$ ), whose recorded date of birth and date of removal suggested they were over 18 years of age at the time of removal ( $n=4$ ), whose start date of their first placement was over a month after their recorded date of removal ( $n=11$ ), and who were missing data necessary for analysis (i.e. gender, court jurisdiction, or final case outcome;  $n=23$ ). We also excluded all teens with final outcomes of "transfer to other agency" ( $n=26$ ) or "child died" ( $n=7$ ). Finally, we excluded youth who had incomplete placement information and therefore for whom it was not possible to calculate a most common placement type ( $n = 9$ ).

Unlike previous phases of the evaluation, we maintained children who had no records of being in TMC in the state of Texas ( $n=27$ ), because having a TMC period was not relevant to the research questions. Finally, we included all siblings from the same case rather than randomly

selecting only one sibling for inclusion. We clustered by case ID to account for similarities between siblings in their case characteristics and permanency outcomes.

The final analytic sample includes 4,047 teens (56.4% with a CASA).<sup>8</sup> The focus of the report is on teens who age out of conservatorship, and therefore our outcomes analyses are limited to the 1,460 teens from the analytic sample with a final case outcome of “aged out” (58.6% with a CASA).

---

<sup>8</sup> The analytic sample is the same as the sample in the November 2018 report with one exception: We exclude nine teens who are missing placement data necessary to calculate “most common placement type”.

## Appendix B

Table 6: Logistic Regression Model- PAL Training Incomplete

	PAL Training Incomplete		
	All (n=1,460)	No-CASA (n=605)	CASA (n=855)
CASA status (CASA = 1)	1.01	--	--
Gender (Male = 1)	<b>1.72<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>1.76<sup>*</sup></b>	<b>1.77<sup>**</sup></b>
Race/ethnicity	--	--	--
White	Referent	Referent	Referent
African American	1.21	1.30	1.18
Hispanic	0.91	0.84	1.01
Other	1.52	2.05	1.35
Last Available County Urban	--	--	--
Urban	Referent	Referent	Referent
Rural	1.11	0.67	1.45
Out of State/Missing	<b>3.98<sup>*</sup></b>	<b>17.50<sup>***</sup></b>	2.05
Length Eligible	<b>0.93<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>0.92<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>0.94<sup>***</sup></b>
Most Common Placement Type	--	--	--
Kinship	<b>4.35<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>3.41<sup>**</sup></b>	<b>5.35<sup>***</sup></b>
Foster	Referent	Referent	Referent
Congregate	0.85	0.75	0.93
Other	<b>3.06<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>2.43<sup>*</sup></b>	<b>3.57<sup>***</sup></b>
Any runaway placements	<b>3.13<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>4.22<sup>***</sup></b>	<b>2.65<sup>***</sup></b>

Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: n=1,460. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. Results are presented as odds ratios.

**Table 7: Logistic Regression Model- Participated in Extended Foster Care at Least 3 Months**

	Participated in Extended Foster Care at Least 3 Months		
	All (n=1,460)	No-CASA (n=605)	CASA (n=855)
<b>CASA status (CASA = 1)</b>	1.06	--	--
<b>Gender (Male = 1)</b>	1.28	<b>1.55*</b>	1.15
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	--	--	--
<b>White</b>	Referent	Referent	Referent
<b>African American</b>	<b>1.92***</b>	<b>2.40**</b>	<b>1.66*</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	1.30	1.17	1.38
<b>Other</b>	1.22	1.16	1.24
<b>Last Available County Urban</b>	--	--	--
<b>Urban</b>	Referent	Referent	Referent
<b>Rural</b>	0.83	1.19	0.69
<b>Out of State/Missing</b>	0.27	0.46	0.21
<b>Most Common Placement Type</b>	--	--	--
<b>Kinship</b>	<b>0.13***</b>	<b>0.16***</b>	<b>0.11***</b>
<b>Foster</b>	Referent	Referent	Referent
<b>Congregate</b>	0.85	0.73	0.93
<b>Other</b>	<b>0.39***</b>	<b>0.21***</b>	<b>0.55*</b>
<b>Any runaway placements</b>	<b>0.22***</b>	<b>0.23***</b>	<b>0.20***</b>

Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: n=1,460. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. Results are presented as odds ratios.

**Table 8: Logistic Regression Model- Perpetrator on Investigation Age 18-21**

	Perpetrator on Any Investigation Between 18-21			Perpetrator on Investigation with "Reason to Believe" Between 18-21		
	All (n=803)	No-CASA (n=370)	CASA (n=433)	All (n=803)	No-CASA (n=370)	CASA (n=433)
<b>CASA status (CASA = 1)</b>	0.98	--	--	0.84	--	--
<b>Gender (Male = 1)</b>	<b>0.31***</b>	<b>0.41**</b>	<b>0.22***</b>	<b>0.31***</b>	<b>0.26**</b>	<b>0.33*</b>
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>White</b>	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent
<b>African American</b>	0.75	0.96	0.56	0.45	0.46	0.41
<b>Hispanic</b>	1.37	1.04	1.60	1.04	0.71	1.26
<b>Other</b>	1.02	1.32	0.71	0.92	0.79	0.89
<b>Last Available County Urban</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Urban</b>	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent
<b>Rural</b>	1.11	2.18	0.65	1.04	2.47	0.50
<b>Most Common Placement Type</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Kinship</b>	0.69	0.70	0.69	0.98	0.81	1.10
<b>Foster</b>	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent	Referent
<b>Congregate</b>	1.04	1.07	1.12	0.95	1.28	0.79
<b>Other</b>	1.10	0.72	1.53	1.35	0.85	1.90
<b>Any runaway placements</b>	<b>1.75*</b>	2.06	1.55	1.38	1.56	1.26

Source: DFPS IMPACT Administrative Data and CASA Program Case Management Data. Notes: n=815. Youth had to be 21 by the end of the data to be included in analysis. Those with Last Available County Urban = Out of State/Missing were dropped from analysis ( No-CASA n = 3, CASA n = 9), because of the small cell size and Out of State/Missing perfectly predicted No Investigation or "Reason to Believe" in most of the models. Those who were out of state at the end of their case prior to aging out were also theoretically less likely to be in the state between ages 18-21 and capable of being indicated as a perpetrator in an investigation. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. Results are presented as odds ratios.

## Appendix C

**Table 9: Transitional Living Services in Texas**

Resource	Description	Eligibility
<b>Independent Living Skills Training (PAL Training)</b>	Local contractors train teens on health and safety, job readiness, financial management, life decisions, and relationships.	Youth 16+ who are likely to age out. As funding allows, youth 14+ can participate.
<b>Experiential Learning</b>	Caregivers provide skills practice, such as meal preparation and money management.	Youth 14+.
<b>Case Management and Aftercare Services</b>	Local contractors provide support to teens, including finding a job, locating housing, or counseling.	Youth preparing to age out or who aged out ages 18 to 21.
<b>Transitional Living Allowance</b>	Teens receive up to \$500 per month for the start-up costs of independent living (up to \$1,000).	Youth who aged out of care, completed PAL training, had a paid placement within 24 months, and are employed or pursuing education.
<b>Aftercare Room and Board Assistance</b>	Teens receive up to \$500 per month for rent, utilities, utility deposits, food, etc. (up to \$3,000).	Youth 18 to 21 who aged out of care, demonstrate need, and are employed or pursuing education.
<b>Education and Training Voucher</b>	Teens receive up to \$5,000 in financial assistance per year towards postsecondary education.	Youth 16 to 21 who meet academic requirements and are in care, aged out, or were adopted after age 16.
<b>Tuition Fee Waiver</b>	Teens are exempt from payment of tuition and fees at any Texas state supported college or university .	Youth under 25 who spent time in care (exact criteria varies by year).
<b>Extended Foster Care</b>	Voluntary continuation of or return to a paid placement, pending placement availability.	Youth 18 to 21 who were in care on their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday, who are employed or pursuing education.

Source: DFPS Transitional Living Services Resource Guide, March 2019.

## Authors

*Cynthia Osborne, Ph.D.*  
Director, Child and Family Research Partnership  
Associate Professor  
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs  
The University of Texas at Austin

*Jennifer Huffman, MPAff*  
Senior Research Associate  
Child and Family Research Partnership

*Hilary Warner-Doe, Ph.D.*  
Data Research Associate  
Child and Family Research Partnership

## Data Support

*Marjorie Crowell*  
Graduate Research Assistant  
Child and Family Research Partnership

## Preferred Citation

Osborne, C., Huffman, J., Warner-Doe, H. (May 2019). *Child Outcomes and Volunteer Effectiveness: CASA's Role in Supporting Transition-Age Youth*. Child and Family Research Partnership, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin.

© May 2019, Child and Family Research Partnership, All Rights Reserved.

*The Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP) is an independent, nonpartisan research group at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin, specializing in issues related to young children, teens, and their parents. We engage in rigorous research and evaluation work aimed at strengthening families and enhancing public policy.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Cary, C., Love, K., & Vorhies, V. (2011). Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 26. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> Biehal, N., & Wade, J. (1999). Taking a chance? The risks associated with going missing from substitute care. *Child Abuse Review*, 8, 366-376.

Courtney, M. E., Skyles, A., Miranda, G., Zinn, A., Howard, E., & George, R. M. (2005). Youth who run away from substitute care (Issue Brief No. 103). Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago. Retrieved from: [https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Courtney\\_Youth-Who-Run-Away\\_Brief\\_2005.pdf](https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Courtney_Youth-Who-Run-Away_Brief_2005.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Biehal, N., & Wade, J. (1999). Taking a chance? The risks associated with going missing from substitute care. *Child Abuse Review*, 8, 366-376

<sup>4</sup> Biehal, N., & Wade, J. (1999). Taking a chance? The risks associated with going missing from substitute care. *Child Abuse Review*, 8, 366-376.

Courtney, M. E., Skyles, A., Miranda, G., Zinn, A., Howard, E., & George, R. M. (2005). Youth who run away from substitute care (Issue Brief No. 103). Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago. Retrieved from: [https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Courtney\\_Youth-Who-Run-Away\\_Brief\\_2005.pdf](https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Courtney_Youth-Who-Run-Away_Brief_2005.pdf)

Pergamit, M. & Ernst, M. (2011). "Running Away from Foster Care: Youths' Knowledge and Access of Services." The University of Chicago, Chapin Hall, and the Urban Institute. Retrieved from:

<https://monarchhousing.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/08/runawayyouth.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. (2017). Child Sex Trafficking in America: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals. Retrieved from:

[http://www.missingkids.com/content/dam/ncmec/en\\_us/Child\\_Sex\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_America\\_Welfare\\_Prof.pdf](http://www.missingkids.com/content/dam/ncmec/en_us/Child_Sex_Trafficking_in_America_Welfare_Prof.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Department of Family and Protective Services. (2019). *Transitional Living Services Resource Guide*. Retrieved from:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource\\_Guides/Transitional\\_Living\\_Services\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Resource_Guides/Transitional_Living_Services_Resource_Guide.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Osborne, C., Huffman, J., & LeClear, M. (2019). The Child Connections Survey. Child and Family Research Partnership, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>8</sup> Geenan, S. & Powers, L. (2007). "Tomorrow is another problem." The experiences of youth in foster care during their transition into adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29, 1085–1101.

<sup>9</sup> Administration for Children and Families. (2015). *National Youth in Transition Database Data Brief #4: Comparing Outcomes Reported by Young People at Ages 17 and 19 in NYTD Cohort 1*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/nytd\\_data\\_brief\\_4.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/nytd_data_brief_4.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Administration for Children and Families. (2015). *National Youth in Transition Database Data Brief #4: Comparing Outcomes Reported by Young People at Ages 17 and 19 in NYTD Cohort 1*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/nytd\\_data\\_brief\\_4.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/nytd_data_brief_4.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Administration for Children and Families. (2015). *National Youth in Transition Database Data Brief #4: Comparing Outcomes Reported by Young People at Ages 17 and 19 in NYTD Cohort 1*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/nytd\\_data\\_brief\\_4.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/nytd_data_brief_4.pdf)