



# FACT SHEET

## WHAT IS CASA?

- CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates.
- CASA is an organization of volunteers who are appointed by judges to advocate for the best interests of children who come into protective care because they have been abused or neglected.

## ON AN AVERAGE DAY IN DALLAS COUNTY:

- Nearly five children enter the foster care system.
- More than 2,600 children who have been removed from their homes are waiting for safe and permanent homes.

## OTHERS ARE INVOLVED IN THE CASE, BUT:

- CPS caseworkers and attorneys often don't have the resources and time to gather enough information to help judges make the best decisions for children.
- There is often a high rate of turnover with caseworkers, attorneys and foster homes.
- For many abused and neglected children, a CASA volunteer is the one constant person dedicated only to them during a frightening, uncertain time.

## ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER:

- CASA volunteers act as the eyes and the ears of the judges.
- Volunteers are trained and supervised to gather information and make recommendations that help judges decide where children can live safely and permanently.
- Volunteers get to know the children themselves, ensuring that the children are safe and their needs are being met while living in foster care.

## THE NEED:

- In 2016, Dallas CASA was only able to serve three out of five abused and neglected children in protective care in Dallas County who needed us.
- Our goal is for every abused and neglected child to have a CASA volunteer to advocate for their best interests and help them have safe, loving, "forever" homes where they can thrive. Dallas CASA plans to serve every abused and neglected child living in protective care.

## KEY FACTS:

- Nationally, more than 90 percent of children with CASA volunteers never again enter the child welfare system.
- In 2016, Dallas CASA served 2,768 children in Dallas County with nearly 1,100 volunteers.
- It costs \$2,020 per year to provide a CASA volunteer to help an abused child have a safe, permanent home.
- It costs taxpayers more than \$43,000 per year to provide child welfare services for an abused or neglected child in foster care.
- Donor dollars are optimally leveraged because funds are used to train and support volunteers who provide services for the children through donated time.