

# Literature Review of Studies on the Effectiveness of Advocacy Models for Children in Dependency

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# OPPAGA

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# Literature Review of Studies on the Effectiveness of Advocacy Models for Children in Dependency

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act requires states to document in their state plan provisions for appointing a guardian ad litem (GAL) to represent a child's best interest in every case of abuse or neglect that results in a judicial proceeding. Congress amended the act in 1996 to allow guardians ad litem to be attorneys or court-appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteers. State requirements vary regarding whether GALs must be attorneys, volunteer CASAs, or professionals (e.g., paid professional GAL, court-appointed special advocate staff, or mental health counselor). Depending on a state's requirements, a child may be appointed a client-directed attorney instead of or in addition to a guardian ad litem.

### REPORT SCOPE

The Legislature directed OPPAGA to conduct a literature review comparing the effectiveness of attorney-based versus volunteer-based representation for children in the dependency process, including outcome measures related to child permanency and well-being.

The effectiveness of different models of advocacy for children in dependency proceedings has been a subject of study among academic researchers, local, state, and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations for over 30 years. The focus of these studies has evolved over time. Early studies sought to assess the efficacy of volunteers and whether they could achieve outcomes similar to attorneys. Over time, the focus of the research shifted to assessing attorney representation. These studies have increasingly shown widespread consensus among academics, practitioners, and states favoring legal representation for children in dependency proceedings. A multidisciplinary team approach has been consistently recommended over the years, though the literature has only recently shifted to an increasing number of evaluations examining team outcomes.

OPPAGA's literature review found that studies in this field have reported mixed results across a variety of topics, most of which fall into the broader categories of child outcomes, child well-being, legal factors, and advocate behavior. In addition, numerous authors have identified research limitations of these studies, which hinder the ability to draw conclusions from the results. Limitations are related to generalizability of results, study design, small sample sizes, selection bias, and adequacy of data collected or data availability.

OPPAGA conducted a review to identify studies that make direct comparisons of legal to volunteer advocacy. Only one study made such a comparison; others examined the efficacy of one advocacy

model or compared multiple models. Most studies OPPAGA reviewed included measures related to child outcomes, and nearly all studies that examined the likelihood of adoption reported that children with a volunteer were more likely to be adopted than experience other permanency outcomes.

Findings related to other outcomes were mixed within and across advocacy approaches. Approximately half of the studies OPPAGA reviewed discussed child well-being; most of these studies reported that cases with volunteer involvement received more services, and several reported that children with volunteers experienced improved family functioning and performed better in school. Slightly more than half of the studies OPPAGA reviewed discussed legal factors and the impact of court processes on outcomes for dependent children. These studies found that children represented by attorneys are more likely to be present in court and that the type of advocacy model may impact the case length in a variety of ways. Approximately one-third of the studies examined advocate behavior and found that the advocate's activities are affected by the type of advocate, the advocate's training, and client and case characteristics. Several of these studies found that cases with volunteers (whether supporting attorneys or working independently), social worker/attorney teams, or attorneys with specialized training were more engaged in advocate activities on behalf of the child than cases without such advocacy.

Finally, several of the more recent studies OPPAGA reviewed reported benefits from a multidisciplinary team approach, including better child outcomes, better family preservation, improved information to the court, and increased rates of case dismissals for some children. Consistent with the findings of the literature review, documents OPPAGA reviewed from professional organizations, federal agencies, and state and local entities focused on high quality legal representation, and several recommended multidisciplinary team models. A consistent theme in studies and documents regardless of the advocacy model deployed is the benefits of having strong advocates with in-depth knowledge of social and legal systems.

# BACKGROUND

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requires states to document in their state plan provisions for appointing a guardian ad litem (GAL) to represent the child's best interest in every case of abuse or neglect that results in a judicial proceeding. Congress amended CAPTA in 1996 to allow GALs to be attorneys or court-appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteers. State requirements vary regarding whether GALs must be attorneys, volunteer CASAs, or professionals.<sup>1</sup> In Florida, volunteers serve as GALs for children in dependency.

Any individual serving as a guardian ad litem provides best-interest advocacy. The term "best interests of a child" generally refers to deliberations undertaken by courts in making decisions about the services, actions, and orders that will best serve a child and who is best suited to care for that child. The ultimate safety and well-being of the child are the predominant concerns of such determinations, and these decisions typically consider many factors related to the child and the parent or caregiver's circumstances and capacity to parent. The best interests of a child may or may not align with a child's expressed wishes. Client-directed attorneys represent a child's expressed wishes and advocate for their child client's wishes in a traditional attorney-client role. In the case of nonverbal children, infants who cannot speak, or children who are unable to direct their attorneys, a substituted judgment model may be used. Under this model, advocates must put themselves in the client's place and in the context of the client's life to make a decision that the client would have likely made if they were able to verbalize a position. Depending on a state's requirements, a child may be appointed a client-directed attorney instead of or in addition to a GAL.

Since at least 1995, national children's law experts have recommended that children in abuse and neglect proceedings be represented by a client-directed attorney, though best interest advocates are not excluded from recommendations. For example, the American Bar Association's Model Act for the representation of children in abuse and neglect proceedings recommends a client-directed attorney for each child and supports the use of best interest advocates as a complement to, and not a replacement for, legal representation. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges states that children are entitled to representation by attorneys and guardians ad litem. Additionally, in 2002, the Florida Bar's Commission on the Legal Needs of Children recommended that Florida fully fund independent advocacy, including attorneys and GALs for children in certain legal and administrative proceedings, and create a Statewide Office of the Child Advocate to oversee and provide best interest and client-directed representation.

Federal child welfare agencies also recommend attorney representation and seem to favor an approach with attorneys working as a team with either volunteers or social workers. A 1988 study commissioned by the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families examined five GAL models to assess the types of activities performed under each model and whether the GALs were effective in serving children's best interests. Volunteers working with attorneys as a team and volunteers working under attorney supervision were both highly recommended; the staff attorney model was also recommended, but not as strongly. From 2009 to 2015, the U.S. Children's Bureau partnered with the University of Michigan Law School to design and evaluate a best practice model. The authors recommended that a child's representative be an individual or office charged with providing legal representation to the child, stating that the functions may be fulfilled by a multidisciplinary team,

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteers serve as CASAs; guardians ad litem may be CASA volunteers, attorneys, or other professionals, such as paid professional GALs, CASA staff, or mental health counselors.

including a lawyer and social workers, paralegals, and/or lay advocates. Training was developed and emphasized six core skills attorneys need in order to implement the model effectively.<sup>2, 3</sup>

In 2020, OPPAGA conducted a review of the Florida Guardian ad Litem Program, the first evaluation since OPPAGA’s program review in 2002. This evaluation included a review of available literature regarding volunteer advocacy and legal representation of children in the dependency system. Many of the more recent studies on child representation acknowledged widespread consensus among academics, practitioners, and states favoring legal representation for children in dependency proceedings. Studies measuring the efficacy of volunteer advocacy found that volunteers performed similarly to attorneys in some respects, but differed in that cases with volunteers tended to have more service provision, higher adoption rates, lower reunification rates, more time in out-of-home care, and fewer placement changes.

# METHODOLOGY

OPPAGA’s review of the extant literature included conducting an online search for peer-reviewed journal articles and reports from pertinent federal and state agencies and nongovernmental entities. OPPAGA searched online for additional studies, professional standards, guidelines, and policy briefs from relevant professional organizations identified through the Child Welfare Information Gateway.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, OPPAGA contacted 61 stakeholders from various professional, legal, and child welfare organizations and prominent researchers in the field. OPPAGA requested any original research conducted by the stakeholders or their organizations, any pertinent research by others of which they were aware, as well as recommendations for any additional stakeholders OPPAGA should contact. Eighty-four percent of those contacted responded, and 36% provided OPPAGA with information. Researchers/research organizations had the highest response rates and provided the most information. (See Exhibit 1.) While stakeholders submitted 39 studies, only 10 had not already been identified by OPPAGA staff; however, 8 of those studies were not within the scope of this project.<sup>5</sup>

**Exhibit 1**  
**Over 80% of Stakeholders Contacted By OPPAGA Responded, and One-Third Provided Information**

Stakeholder Type	Number That Were Contacted	Number That Responded	Number That Provided Information
Individual researchers or research organizations	18	16	10
Child welfare entities	21	18	4
Legal professionals	15	11	5
Professional associations	7	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>51 (84%)</b>	<b>22 (36%)</b>

Source: OPPAGA analysis of stakeholder responses.

<sup>2</sup> Core skills include the ability to enter the child’s world and engage with the child; assess child safety; actively evaluate the child’s and family’s needs; advance case planning; develop a theory of the case that will direct advocacy; and effectively advocate for each need or goal.

<sup>3</sup> Treatment group attorneys attended a two-day training session on the six core skills, and every quarter thereafter they had the opportunity to receive supplemental training via group meetings with a lead attorney trainer and individual discussions with a resource/coach attorney.

<sup>4</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway is a service of the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides information and resources pertaining to child welfare. For this report, OPPAGA compiled a list of pertinent organizations from two of the Child Welfare Information Gateway’s organizational lists: Organizations Providing Information on Child Welfare and the Law, and Advocacy and Public Policy Organizations: Child Abuse and Neglect/Child Welfare.

<sup>5</sup> Studies outside of OPPAGA’s scope included those that evaluated only parent representation, provided outcomes for all children in dependency without any reference as to whether children had volunteer or legal advocacy, or did not analyze different types of advocacy models or provide information on child outcomes.

# FINDINGS

## **Studies reported methodological limitations and mixed results; only one directly compared legal to volunteer advocacy, but several cited positive outcomes with a team approach**

OPPAGA identified 37 studies within the project scope, the majority of which were published by peer-reviewed academic journals, followed by nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, and law journals. Most (31) studies can be categorized as efficacy evaluations or advocacy model comparisons. Six studies were literature or law reviews; an additional study relied on a literature review to report some outcome measures.<sup>6,7</sup> OPPAGA's review and analysis of these 37 studies resulted in four broad categories of variables assessed: outcomes (31), child well-being (21), court processes (22), and advocate behavior (12).<sup>8</sup> See Appendices A and B for a complete list of studies reviewed. Throughout the report, the studies OPPAGA reviewed are referenced with capital letter superscripts, as identified in Appendix B.

Earlier studies examining advocacy for dependent children sought to assess the efficacy of volunteers and whether they could achieve outcomes similar to attorneys. Over time, the focus of this research shifted to assessing attorney representation. OPPAGA's 2020 literature review found that many of the more recent studies on child representation acknowledged widespread consensus among academics, practitioners, and states favoring legal representation for children in dependency proceedings. Since research on the subject first began, a team approach has been consistently recommended throughout the years, but there has only recently been an increasing number of evaluations examining outcomes achieved through a multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach. Overall, these studies demonstrate benefits of using teams to advocate for children in the dependency system, such as increased attendance of the child in court, discussion of the child's preferences and well-being in court, better family preservation (including fewer removals and more reunifications or placements with relatives), and more case-appropriate services. In some instances, the early provision of individualized assessments and services resulted in cases being dismissed and avoiding the court process.

As numerous authors have pointed out, the literature is not without limitations, which hinders the ability to draw conclusions from the results. Limitations are related to generalizability of results, study design, small sample sizes, selection bias, and adequacy of data collected or data availability. Evaluation design issues and selection bias were the two most frequently reported limitations in the reviewed studies. Selection bias is particularly problematic, as children who are appointed a volunteer tend to have more complex cases than those who are not. Although studies attempt to control for the variables that make these cases different, there may still be unobserved or unmeasured differences that can limit a study's ability to isolate effects of the intervention. Studies using random assignment of children to a treatment group are rare; only two studies reviewed randomly assigned children to a

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<sup>6</sup> Discussions of findings include these literature reviews, which may reference the same studies discussed in this report.

<sup>7</sup> The additional study collected data to analyze outcomes; however, the authors relied upon two studies to discuss measures for which they did not have data.

<sup>8</sup> Some studies discussed variables included in multiple categories and are thus counted more than once.

treatment or control group. The first was published in 1991 and examined a sample of 122 children in California.<sup>A</sup> This study was also unique in that it matched volunteers and minority families sharing similar ethnic, cultural, and language backgrounds. The second study was published in 2016 and randomly assigned 409 children in Michigan to be represented by an MDT or a single attorney; however, the attorneys were the same for both groups.<sup>DD</sup> For cases randomly assigned to the treatment group, attorneys were to collaborate with social workers, and for cases assigned to the control group, attorneys represented their clients as they normally would, without collaborating with a social worker.

The advocacy models used for comparisons also vary across studies, making comparisons of results difficult. For example, while two studies may intend to assess the efficacy of a volunteer program using a treatment group (children with a volunteer) and a control group (children without a volunteer), one study may take place in a state that requires all children to also have attorneys and the other may take place in a state that does not. Consequently, outcomes of these studies are not comparable because they are not assessing the same type of advocacy model. These limitations are important context when reviewing study findings. (See Exhibit 2 for descriptions of different advocacy models evaluated by studies included in OPPAGA’s review.)

## Exhibit 2

### Studies Use Various Terms to Describe Advocacy Types

Advocacy Model	Definition <sup>1</sup>
Court-appointed special advocate (CASA)	Volunteer advocate who has completed training requirements and certification process
CASA staff	Paid professional staff whose job is to represent children in dependency actions; may provide supervision to volunteers and also cover cases as needed
Contract guardian ad litem (GAL)	Typically paid professionals with some child welfare and legal knowledge
Attorney GAL	Attorney appointed to provided best-interest representation
Trained advocate	Private attorney, law student, or lay volunteer who received specialized training to identify the needs and interests of children and vigorously advocate for those interests in court, within the child’s family, with court workers, and with social services agencies; these three groups performed comparably and were combined into a single demonstration group to compare to a control group private attorneys without the specialized training
Trained attorney	Attorneys who received training on six core skills for attorneys representing children in dependency proceedings
Untrained attorney	Attorneys who did not receive specialized training as noted above and were compared to either a demonstration group of three trained advocate types or a group of attorneys who received core skills training
Staff attorney	Paid attorney assigned to juvenile or dependency court full-time
Independent legal representation or private attorney	Private firms or a panel of court-appointed attorneys
County-affiliated legal representation or public attorney	Public defenders, district attorneys, or county counsel
Parent child representation program	A program providing high-quality legal representation for parents and children through reduced attorney caseloads, rigorous quality assurance, and, in complex cases, the use of social service professionals as part of the legal representation team.
Multidisciplinary legal office	A formalized model of providing multidisciplinary legal services in a law office structure
Standards-based legal representation	Attorneys who have received specialized training for representing children in dependency proceedings and are held to performance standards regarding caseloads, contact with children, and other legal practice considerations

<sup>1</sup> As defined in the studies using this terminology.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of available literature.



**Only one study directly compared legal to volunteer advocacy, while others examined the efficacy of a single advocacy model or compared multiple models; several studies reported benefits of a multidisciplinary team approach.** Thirty-one studies examined efficacy or conducted program evaluations of a single model while seven studies examined multiple advocacy models.<sup>9,10</sup> OPPAGA identified only one study, published in 1990, that directly compared volunteers to staff attorneys [a midwestern city, total sample size of 158 cases].<sup>B</sup> However, in this study, volunteers had access to attorneys for legal advice. The overall results demonstrated that the two groups were more similar than different in the ways they handled similar cases and in the outcomes achieved. The two groups performed comparably on most outcome and process variables but differed in that children with a volunteer received significantly more services, spent significantly less time placed in their own home, and had significantly more adoptions.<sup>11</sup> While the attorney model resulted in more reunifications, the difference was not significant. The authors reported that study results led to staff attorney offices adding trained volunteers to their staff.

In addition to the comparison of volunteers to attorneys, six other studies examined multiple types of advocacy approaches. For example, a 2008 study included different types of attorneys in California, a 2010 study involved different types of guardian ad litem models in Washington, and a 2013 literature review included studies of various models.<sup>12,13,C,D,R</sup> Three other studies compared multiple advocacy models.

1. A 1986 study in Michigan compared private attorneys, law students, and lay volunteers (under the supervision of an experienced attorney) who received specialized training; because they performed comparably, they were combined into a single demonstration group for comparison with a group of attorneys who did not receive the specialized training.<sup>14,G</sup>
2. A six-state study in 1988 compared private attorneys, staff attorneys, law students, volunteer and staff attorney teams, and individual volunteers (working under attorney supervision).<sup>F</sup>
3. A 2016 study in Washington compared client-directed attorneys only, client-directed attorneys and volunteer teams, and volunteers or best-interest attorneys only.<sup>H</sup>

Nine studies, published between 1991 and 2019, conducted other types of comparisons of cases with and without a volunteer. In two studies, children in the volunteer and no volunteer groups all had attorneys; another study did not specify how volunteers and attorneys worked together; and six studies did not report the children's legal representation status.<sup>15,E,K,L,M,O,BB,CC,FF,GG</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Literature and law review articles were included in these counts.

<sup>10</sup> One of the studies examining attorney representation compared multiple types of attorney groups and, for the purpose of this section, is also included as a multiple model study.

<sup>11</sup> The two groups performed similarly on the following outcome variables: length of time the case was in the judicial system, whether the child stayed with their abuser, and reentry into the judicial system. The groups performed similarly on the following process variables: number of continuances, number of placement changes, time from case opening to initial disposition, and number of voluntary dismissals after the case was opened. More services for parents of children with volunteers were identified in court findings, but the difference was not significant.

<sup>12</sup> The different attorney groups were categorized as county-affiliated (public defenders, prosecutors, or county counsel) and independent (private firms or a panel of court-appointed attorneys). However, at times, children also had CASAs or GALs.

<sup>13</sup> The different CASA advocacy models were: CASA volunteer, CASA staff, contract GAL, mixed representation (case transferred from a CASA to CASA staff or vice versa), and no CASA/GAL. Children assigned attorneys were categorized as no CASA/GAL.

<sup>14</sup> Demonstration attorneys and volunteers received four days of training from the University of Michigan Law School Child Advocacy Program; law students received similar training in their coursework at the Child Advocacy Law Clinic. All were given a copy of a book on social work with abused and neglected children. They were trained to identify the needs and interests of children and vigorously advocate for those interests in court, within the child's family, with court workers, and with social services agencies.

<sup>15</sup> In one study, CASA volunteers were noted to provide information to agency staff attorneys, but the working relationship between CASAs and attorneys was not specified (i.e., collaborative or supervisory).



Nine studies discussed benefits of an MDT approach, which may include an attorney and a volunteer or social worker; six of these studies were published in 2016 or later.<sup>16</sup> Four studies included at least one MDT group in comparisons of advocacy models and reported positive benefits of team representation, such as increased court attendance by the child, discussion of the child's preferences and well-being in court, more timely and complete information to the court, and better likelihood of family placements, reunification, and case-appropriate services.<sup>F,H,K,L</sup> A 2017 study compared outcomes for Colorado children residing in counties with attorneys working in multidisciplinary legal offices to outcomes for children residing in counties with independent contractor GALs.<sup>N</sup> In both models, attorneys and social workers worked as a team, with the difference being whether the attorney worked within a multidisciplinary legal office or independently. Four additional studies also discussed the efficacy of the MDT approach and found that the MDT resulted in improved child outcomes, such as fewer removals and greater likelihood of family placement.<sup>E,DD,EE,KK</sup> Moreover, a significant number of cases were more likely to be dismissed and did not need to be court-involved when there was early access to individualized, client-focused assessments and services. Three of the four publications recommended the MDT approach after researching various advocacy models; the fourth reported that legal and social services are both critical for the success of a dependency case but did not find one model that would meet the needs of all counties within the study state.

**Most studies included measures related to child outcomes; nearly all studies that examined adoption reported that children with a volunteer were more likely to be adopted, while findings related to other outcomes were mixed within and across advocacy approaches.** Thirty-one studies looked at the effect of advocacy models in dependency proceedings on child welfare-related outcomes. The primary outcomes examined were permanency, amount of time spent in the dependency system, likelihood of a child entering out-of-home care (and how long those who did remained there), and number of placement changes experienced by the child.

### Permanency

Twenty-seven studies discussed permanency in some respect, but findings were inconsistent and most were not statistically significant. For example, one 2000 study reported that children in Kansas with a volunteer [n=119] were less likely to reach permanency than children without a volunteer [n=81]; a 1999 Nevada study concluded that children with a volunteer [n=68] were more likely to reach permanency than those without a volunteer [n=121].<sup>K,O</sup> Two literature reviews, published in 2004 and 2013, reported no differences in the likelihood of achieving permanency.<sup>P,Q,R</sup> A 1991 study from California reported that children with a volunteer [n=60] were more likely to have reunification as a case plan permanency goal rather than long-term custody than children without a volunteer [n=62].<sup>A</sup> A 2010 study of multiple guardian ad litem models in Washington found different permanency outcomes based on age, race, and advocacy type [total sample size of 3,013 dependent children].<sup>D</sup>

Regarding legal representation, a 2020 study from Washington demonstrated a 22% increase in permanency rates for counties providing standards-based legal representation.<sup>S</sup> A 2016 study found no difference in permanency rates for children in Georgia and Washington represented by attorneys with specialized training versus attorneys without such training.<sup>T</sup> However, adolescents in Washington with a trained attorney were more likely to achieve permanency within six months than those represented by attorneys without specialized training [total sample size of 4,274 children]. Four

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<sup>16</sup> Three studies specifically evaluated the MDT model, as identified in Appendix A, Exhibit A-1. Two studies of volunteer efficacy involved volunteers working with attorneys, two studies of multiple models included an MDT group in the study comparisons, and two studies evaluating attorney models discussed the MDT model.

studies discussing the Foster Children’s Project (FCP) in Palm Beach County, Florida, reported that children with legal representation had higher rates of permanency due to adoption and long-term custody, but legal representation did not result in significantly lower rates of reunification [original study published in 2008; 1,496 children represented by the FCP compared to 905 children referred but ineligible for FCP representation].<sup>U,V,W,X</sup> Oregon’s 2016-17 annual study involving a team approach found that counties with parent and child legal representation programs had permanency rates higher than the statewide average.<sup>17,Y</sup> A 2017 study comparing multidisciplinary legal offices (MDLO) to independent attorneys working with social workers in Colorado found that children represented by MDLOs had a statistically significantly higher removal rate (67% vs. 62%) and were less likely to be adopted, though the percentage of children remaining at home or reunified was comparable across the two groups [2,458 children; 2,711 advocates, and 210 cases].<sup>N</sup>

### *Time to Permanency*

Among studies examining time to permanency, results were inconsistent for both volunteer and legal advocacy. A 2010 study of multiple guardian ad litem models in Washington reported that, among cases ending in adoption, cases with volunteers and CASA staff were finalized five to six months sooner than those with a contract GAL or no volunteer or GAL.<sup>D</sup> Infants had the timeliest outcomes, and children ages 6 to 12 were most likely to remain in care four or more years after their dependency petition was filed. Caucasian children were the least likely, and Native American children were almost twice as likely to still have an open case at the end of the study [total sample size of 3,013 children, 47% represented by volunteers]. Two reports on legal representation in Texas, published in 2011 and 2021, stated that parents and children not having legal representation early in the process delays permanency and that effective representation would speed up reunification or placement in a permanent home.<sup>18,E,Z</sup> A 2009 study examining attorney GALs in five Nebraska counties found that, overall, GALs were not zealously advocating for appropriate permanency, and there was variation in the average length of foster care stay among children who eventually returned home or were adopted.<sup>19,AA</sup> In contrast, a 2015 study of client-directed legal representation found that children in Palm Beach County, Florida represented by the Foster Children’s Project attorneys exited to permanency 1.59 times faster than children not represented by the FCP.<sup>V</sup> Oregon’s 2016-17 annual study found that children in counties with parent and child representation programs were reunified five months faster than the statewide average, and that time to reunification had consistently decreased since program inception.<sup>Y</sup>

### *Reunification*

Results were mixed across representation types regarding reunification. Four studies reported that cases with legal representation or a team approach were more likely to be reunified, one of which also reported that cases with a law student or private attorney were least likely to reunify among all advocacy models examined [publication dates ranged from 1988 to 2021].<sup>E,F,Y,Z</sup> Four studies reported that children with a volunteer were less likely to be reunified, while two reported that cases with a volunteer were more likely to be reunified, though one stated the difference was not significant [publication dates ranged from 1996-2019].<sup>P,M,O,BB,CC,FF</sup> A 2010 study of multiple guardian ad litem models in Washington found that older children were more likely to be reunified than younger children; Black and Native American children were less often reunified than Latino or Caucasian

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<sup>17</sup> Sample size not reported.

<sup>18</sup> The 2011 study surveyed 94 attorneys and 51 youth, and interviewed 30 youth. The 2021 study evaluated representation models in other states.

<sup>19</sup> Sample size not reported.

children; and children assigned paid professional CASA staff were significantly more likely to be reunified than children assigned a volunteer [total sample size of 3,013 children, 47% represented by volunteers].<sup>D</sup> One literature review published in 2004 reported that reunification was equally likely for cases with a volunteer, while another literature review published in 2013 reported that permanency outcomes other than adoption were either inconsistent or differences were not significant.<sup>Q,R</sup>

### *Adoption*

Nine of 10 studies that examined volunteer assignment and the likelihood of adoption reported that children with a volunteer were more likely to be adopted, including a study comparing volunteer advocacy to legal advocacy; the tenth study reported that adoption was more frequent for children without volunteers but noted that the sample size was too small to analyze [publication dates ranged from 1990-2019]. A 2010 study of multiple guardian ad litem models in Washington found that older children were much less likely to be adopted than younger children; Native American and Latino children were less often adopted than Caucasian children, who were adopted slightly less often than Black children; and all advocacy groups had significantly higher adoption rates than the group with no volunteer or GAL [total sample size of 3,013 children, 47% represented by volunteers].<sup>D</sup>

Three studies evaluating legal representation specifically discussed adoption rates. Two studies evaluating the Palm Beach County Foster Children Project in Florida, published in 2008 and 2015, found that children with attorneys had higher rates of permanency through adoption and long-term custody without also having significantly lower rates of reunification.<sup>20,U,V</sup> The authors of the 2008 study reported that older children and Black children were less likely to be adopted or to be in long-term custody.<sup>U</sup> The third study, Oregon's 2016-17 annual study of counties with and without parent and child representation programs, found that the percentage of children adopted decreased during the first three years of the program and then increased; authors also found that adoption was more likely for younger children.<sup>Y</sup> A study evaluating the efficacy of attorneys working in multidisciplinary legal offices compared to independent contract attorneys working within a team model found that children represented by attorneys in multidisciplinary legal offices were slightly less likely to be adopted.<sup>N</sup>

### *Kinship Placement*

There was no clear consensus on the likelihood of kinship placements, regardless of advocacy type. For example, a 2004 nationwide study [n=3,774 children] and a 2019 Texas study [n=31,574 children, 56% with a volunteer] both reported that kinship care was less likely for volunteer cases, while a 2015 study in Tennessee found that volunteer cases [n=129] were more likely to be unified with relatives than cases without volunteers [n=175].<sup>BB,P</sup> A 2010 study of multiple guardian ad litem models in Washington found no significant differences between groups regarding kinship placement rates [total sample size of 3,013 children, 47% represented by volunteers].<sup>D</sup> Similarly, literature reviews published in 2004 and 2013 found no significant differences for volunteer assignment and kinship placement.<sup>R,Q</sup> A 1986 study of multiple advocacy models found no difference between cases with trained advocates (volunteers, attorneys, or law students) [n=53 cases] and attorneys without specialized training [n=38 cases].<sup>G</sup> A 2016 study reported no difference in the likelihood of kinship placement for cases assigned to attorneys who received specialized training versus attorneys who did

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<sup>20</sup> Sample size in the 2008 study was 1,496 children with FCP representation and 905 children referred but ineligible for FCP representation. Sample size in the 2015 study was 804 children.

not [Georgia and Washington, total sample size of 4,274 children].<sup>T</sup> A 2016 study pertaining to MDT advocacy in Michigan, and a 2017 discussion of that study by the same author, reported that children represented by the MDT had an increased likelihood of being placed with relatives compared to children represented by a single attorney [total sample size of 409 children].<sup>DD,EE</sup> Oregon's 2016-17 annual study of counties with and without parent and child representation programs reported mixed results; children in two counties with the program experienced kinship-placement rates lower than the statewide average, while children in a third county with the program experienced kinship-placement rates higher than the statewide average.<sup>Y</sup>

### Time Spent in Dependency

Among the eight studies that examined time spent in the dependency system, results were mixed for both volunteer and legal advocacy. Four studies reported that children with a volunteer advocate spent more time in the dependency system, though differences were not consistent or significant [publication dates ranged from 2000 to 2013].<sup>K,Q,R,BB</sup> A 1988 study evaluating different advocacy models for 245 cases across six states found that children with a staff attorney only or a volunteer only spent less time in dependency, while children with a volunteer and attorney team spent more time in the system; however, the authors acknowledged there were too few closed cases in the analysis for definitive assessment.<sup>F</sup> A 1986 study examining multiple representation models in Michigan found that children with advocates who received specialized training [n=53 cases] spent less time in the dependency system than children with attorneys who did not receive the specialized training [n=38 cases].<sup>G</sup> A 2016 study and a 2017 discussion of that study reported that MDT representation in Michigan was better at resolving some cases more quickly than single attorney representation [total sample size of 409 children].<sup>DD,EE</sup>

### Out-of-Home Care

Studies discussed findings related to out-of-home care in two ways: the likelihood of a child entering out-of-home care and the length of time spent in out-of-home care. Results were mixed and varied depending on advocacy type for both measures. Three studies, published between 1988 and 2004, reported a greater likelihood of out-of-home placement for children with a volunteer, one of which also reported greater out-of-home placement likelihood for children with a private attorney [sample sizes ranged from 158 children to 3,774 children; two studies took place across multiple states and one took place in an unspecified midwestern city].<sup>B,F,BB</sup> A 2000 Kansas study, in which all children had attorney GALs and some also had volunteers, reported a lower likelihood of out-of-home placement after 24 months for children with a volunteer [n=119]; this study also reported that children without a volunteer [n=81] were more likely to be placed in institutions.<sup>K</sup> A 1986 study reported that children in Michigan with trained advocates were less likely to be in out-of-home care than children with attorneys without specialized training.<sup>G</sup>

Three studies found that children with a volunteer spent more time in out-of-home care; one was published in 1990 and compared cases with a volunteer [n=60] to cases with a staff attorney [n=98], another was a national study published in 2006, and the third was a 2015 report comparing children with a volunteer [n=129] to children without a volunteer [n=175] in Tennessee.<sup>B,CC,FF</sup> Conversely, two studies found that children with a volunteer spent less time in out-of-home care; both of these studies were published in the mid-to-late nineties and both reported outcomes for children with and without volunteers.<sup>M,O</sup> A 2018 literature review stated children with a volunteer were less likely to spend time in long-term foster care. A 2010 study evaluating different guardian ad litem models in Washington

found that children without a volunteer or GAL were significantly more likely to remain in care than children with a volunteer; those with a volunteer were more likely to remain in care than those with a CASA staff or those who had a change from one model to another [total sample size of 3,013 children].<sup>D</sup> A 2008 study examining legal representation in California found that children who received independent types of representation spent more time in foster care than children with county-affiliated types of representation, but the difference was not significant.<sup>21,C</sup> A 2009 study evaluating attorney GALs in Nebraska found wide variation in the average amount of time spent in foster care among children who eventually returned home or were adopted.<sup>AA</sup> Two Texas reports examining various legal representation models stated that quality legal representation has been shown to significantly reduce the time children spend in foster care [published in 2011 and 2021].<sup>E,Z</sup> Oregon's 2016-17 annual report evaluating counties with a parent and child representation program reported that length of time in care was mixed depending on case outcome; children in the treatment counties who were reunified experienced decreased time to reunification, while children who were ultimately adopted experienced increased time to adoption in two counties and decreased time to adoption in a third county.<sup>Y</sup>

### Placement Changes

Sixteen studies reported placement change information. Seven studies published between 1996 and 2018 reported fewer placement changes for children with a volunteer. Three studies, published in 1990, 2004, and 2010, reported no significant differences for children with a volunteer.<sup>B,D,BB</sup> Studies involving multiple advocacy models had mixed results. In a 1986 Michigan study, children with trained advocates [n=53 cases] had a higher number of foster care placements than those represented by attorneys without specialized training [n=38 cases]; a 1988 multi-state study demonstrated that cases with private attorneys only and volunteers only had a higher number of out-of-home placements [total sample size of 245 cases].<sup>G,F</sup> A 2020 study in Washington reported no difference in the number of placement changes for children in counties with standards-based legal representation and children in counties with attorneys not providing such representation, as did a 2016 study comparing attorneys with and without specialized training.<sup>S</sup> A 2008 California study reported that children with county-affiliated types of legal representation had more placement changes than children with independent types of representation [n=27,807 children in foster care].<sup>C</sup> In a 2017 Colorado study, children represented by attorneys in a multidisciplinary team office [n=1,845 children] were more likely to have fewer moves than children represented by independent contract attorneys working in a team model [n=573 children].<sup>N</sup>

**Approximately half of the studies discussed child well-being; most of these studies reported that cases with volunteer involvement received more services, and several reported that children with volunteers experienced improved family functioning and better school performance.** Twenty-one studies looked at the effect of advocacy models in dependency proceedings on children's well-being. Research supports the importance of promoting the well-being of children and families, which includes cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social functioning, and physical health and development. The primary aspects of well-being that were examined in the studies OPPAGA reviewed included service provision, re-entry into foster care, and other less frequently studied variables such as preservation of connections and family functioning and educational performance.

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<sup>21</sup> Child sample size of 27,807 youth in foster care.

### Service Provision

Fourteen studies, published between 1986 to 2020, discussed service provision, four of which were literature or law reviews and one that relied on a literature review to report this outcome. Nine studies reported that children with a volunteer and their families were more likely to receive services, such as mental and medical health services, substance abuse services, legal services, and family support services; a tenth study reported that 87% of youth with a volunteer were referred for services. Two of the 10 studies included multiple representation models.<sup>F,G</sup> A 1986 Michigan study found that advocates with specialized training obtained more services for their cases through orders for treatment and assessment than attorneys without specialized training; a 1988 study evaluating 245 cases across six states reported those with a volunteer and attorney team, volunteer only, and staff attorney only were more likely to have more specific orders for treatment and evaluation per hearing and more likely to have more appropriate services than cases with a private attorney or law student.<sup>G,F</sup> Similarly, a 2019 law review examining legal representation found that youth with attorneys had more specific case plans and services.<sup>W</sup> A 2009 study found that Texas children with [n=327] and without [n=254] a volunteer received generally similar services across a two-year period, except those with a volunteer received more counseling services and those without a volunteer received more psychiatric evaluations.<sup>GG</sup> A 2003 study reported that volunteers were more likely to investigate whether there were more appropriate, alternative services for children or their families.<sup>L</sup> Conversely, a 2009 study evaluating attorney GALs in Nebraska did not discuss the likelihood of service provision but reported that attorney GALs were less likely to use independent experts to assist them in understanding clients and in presenting alternative service plans to the court.<sup>AA</sup>

### Reentry into Care

Ten studies, published between 1986 and 2018, discussed further maltreatment or reentry into dependency. Four reported that cases with volunteers or trained advocates had lower rates of subsequent maltreatment or reentry into the dependency system than cases without volunteers or with attorneys who had not received specialized training, respectively; a fifth study reported that of the cases with volunteers that were initially dismissed from court, none had returned six months later. Four studies indicated that there was no significant difference in reentry rates; one published in 2008 evaluated legal representation in Palm Beach County, Florida, one was published in 1990 and compared volunteers to attorneys in a Midwestern city, one evaluated volunteers nationwide in 2004, and one was a literature review published in 2013.<sup>B,R,U,BB</sup> Oregon's 2016-17 annual report examining parent and child legal representation programs reported that two treatment counties had higher safe reunification rates than the statewide average, but one county's rate was slightly below the statewide average.<sup>Y</sup>

### Other Well-Being Factors

Several less frequently studied variables related to well-being were noted in the literature. A 2016 study of multidisciplinary team representation in Michigan and a subsequent discussion of the study published in 2017 found that social worker and attorney teams were better at preserving children's connections to their families, and remaining connected has been shown to result in better life-long outcomes.<sup>EE,DD</sup> A 2009 study found that Texas children with volunteers [n=327] seemed to have better family functioning than children without volunteers [n=254]; the same results were reported in a 2013 literature review.<sup>GG,R</sup> A 2010 study of multiple guardian ad litem models in Washington reported that volunteers advocated for sibling visits in 24% of cases where siblings did not live together [total

sample size of 3,013].<sup>D</sup> Similarly, a 1988 study of multiple advocacy models across six states found that cases with attorney models were less likely to be placed with siblings than cases with volunteers [total sample size of 245 cases].<sup>F</sup>

Three studies reported that children with volunteers performed better in school both academically and behaviorally, two of which were literature reviews published in 2013 and 2018, and one published in 2009 that compared Texas children with [n=327] and without [n=254] volunteers.<sup>R,HH,GG</sup> A 2019 law review examining legal representation reported that one children's law center had 70% of youth with counsel enroll in post-secondary education, and 67% of the center's clients who were eligible graduated high school.<sup>W</sup> Conversely, a 2009 study found that attorney GALs in Nebraska were not actively investigating their clients' educational needs.<sup>AA</sup>

A 2019 Oklahoma study found that older children with a volunteer reported more hopefulness than younger children with a volunteer [total sample size of 280, no comparison group].<sup>II</sup> A 2009 Texas study found that although scores on self-reported measures of self-esteem and locus of control increased over a two-year period, there were no significant differences between children with [n=327] and without a volunteer [n=254].<sup>GG</sup>

A 2016 study found that Washington children with attorney and volunteer teams or only attorneys had their well-being discussed in court more often than children with only a volunteer or GAL [total sample size of 872 children].<sup>H</sup> A 2010 Washington study of multiple guardian ad litem models compared the number of volunteers and the number of social workers that children had throughout the life of their case; most children had just one volunteer but only 10% had the same social worker.<sup>D</sup> Children with fewer social workers or volunteers had shorter lengths of stay and children with multiple social workers or volunteers were more likely to still have an open case at the study's end. A 2020 study evaluating attorney representation in Washington found that children in treatment counties with standards-based legal representation who had an on-the-run event had a decrease in the average number of days they were on the run after program implementation compared to children in counties without such representation.<sup>S</sup>

**Slightly more than half of the studies discussed legal factors and impact of court processes on outcomes for dependent children; studies found that children represented by attorneys are more likely to be present in court and that the advocacy model may impact case length.** Twenty-two studies examined the effects of various legal factors on children's dependency-related outcomes, such as court participation and factors associated with advocate appointment and case length.

### Court Participation

Three studies, published between 2016 and 2021, reported that children who have an attorney advocate in dependency cases are more likely to attend court hearings and are more engaged in the process.<sup>H,W,KK</sup> The 2016 study found that children with only a volunteer or GAL were present in court 6% of the time compared to 18% for attorney and volunteer teams and 29% for those solely represented by attorneys [n=872 children].<sup>H</sup> A fourth study found that children in Colorado represented by attorneys from a multidisciplinary legal office were less likely to appear in court than those represented by independent contract attorneys [n=2,711 advocates, 210 cases, published in 2017].<sup>N</sup> A fifth study from 2009 discussed attorney GALs' and other court stakeholders' perception of how often the attorney GALs advocated for child clients' presence in court and opportunity to speak to the judge. A majority of attorney GALs reported always or usually engaging in this type of advocacy; however, in interviews, many GALs expressed a lack of support for the child's presence in court, and



other stakeholders interviewed said GALs only sometimes advocate for the child's presence and participation in court [Nebraska].<sup>AA</sup> A 2004 literature review reported that mothers of children who had a volunteer were more likely to appear in court.<sup>Q</sup> Two studies (from 1988 and 2017) discussed the advocate's presence at hearings and found that all groups were equally likely to attend all hearings; a 1988 study examined multiple types of advocacy models in six states [n=245 cases] and a 2017 study compared different means of providing multidisciplinary team representation in Colorado [n=2,458 children, 2,711 advocates, and 210 cases].<sup>F,N</sup>

### Advocate Appointment

Five studies that were published from 1996 to 2021 evaluating legal representation looked at factors associated with appointment, such as timing, duration, and appointment method [sample sizes ranged from 81 to 197 children].<sup>22</sup> These studies support appointing both children's and parent's attorneys as soon as a removal petition is filed; early attorney appointment for children and parents has been shown to have a positive effect on the direction of the case (e.g., increased negotiated agreements, earlier returns, or avoiding the need for removal), improve permanency, and is a recommended best practice of multiple legal associations.<sup>E,W,Z,AA</sup> The 1996 study found that volunteer intervention was more effective when the volunteer was assigned early in the legal proceedings, particularly between pretrial and disposition [a midwestern city, total sample size of 197 children].<sup>M</sup> In addition to early appointments, one 2011 study also recommended that children's attorneys stay on the case until the child exits the foster care system and parents' attorneys stay on the case until the period for filing post-trial motions has passed [n=81 children and 110 advocates in Texas].<sup>Z</sup> In this study, judges who appoint attorneys from private practice also indicated a preference for a representation office/public defender model to provide better quality representation.

### Case Length and Associated Factors

Fifteen studies evaluated case length and associated factors, such as the number of hearings, timing between hearings, and number of continuances, and results were generally mixed across advocacy type. Eight studies published from 1990 to 2021 found no significant differences in case length between groups; four evaluated legal representation, two evaluated volunteer advocacy (one of which involved volunteer and attorney teams), one evaluated different methods of providing multidisciplinary legal representation, and one compared volunteers to attorneys [1990: 158 cases in a midwestern city; 2000: 200 children in Kansas; 2004: 3,774 children nationwide; 2008 and 2012: 2,401 children in Florida; 2015: 804 children in Florida; 2017: 2,458 children, 2,711 advocates, and 210 cases in Colorado; 2021: Texas].<sup>B,E,K,N,U,V,X,BB</sup> Three additional studies from 1986 to 2021 found that multidisciplinary representation (2), high quality legal representation (1), and trained advocates (1) all resulted in shorter case length [1986: 91 cases in Michigan; 2016: 409 children in Michigan; 2021: Texas].<sup>23,24,E,G,DD</sup> Oregon's 2016-17 annual report indicated that case length varied by the type of outcome achieved for children in counties with a parent and child representation program; it took less time for children to reunify and time to adoption varied by the county of residence.<sup>Y</sup> Lastly, a 2013 literature review reported mixed results, as some studies reported that cases with a volunteer were open longer, some were open for shorter periods, and others reported no difference.<sup>R</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Only two studies reported child sample sizes.

<sup>23</sup> Sample sizes not reported in all studies.

<sup>24</sup> The 1986 study in Michigan reported shorter case length for both trained advocates working independently and as a team.

Two studies discussed the number of hearings. A 2017 study of a multidisciplinary team model in Michigan found that a significant number of children (approximately 20%) with MDT representation did not need to be court-involved when they had early access to individual, client-focused assessments and services; this resulted in the court avoiding jurisdiction and all subsequent hearings and procedures that would have followed.<sup>EE</sup> A 2015 study of volunteer advocacy in Tennessee found that, compared to children who were reunified, children with a volunteer who were adopted were more likely to have a higher number of court hearings [n=304 children].<sup>CC</sup> Similarly, another study published in 1986 evaluating different advocacy models in Michigan found that cases with trained advocates were more likely to be dismissed without the child first being made a ward of the court, though there was no information on number of hearings [n=91 cases].<sup>G</sup>

Timing between hearings was discussed in three studies, and results were mixed. One 1988 study compared multiple advocacy approaches and found that cases with only a staff attorney or only a volunteer had the shortest times between hearings, while cases with a volunteer and attorney team had the longest median times [n=245 cases in six states].<sup>F</sup> However, the authors acknowledged that there were too few closed cases for a definitive assessment, and sometimes volunteers were appointed much later in a case. A second study from 2017 comparing different means of providing MDT representation in Colorado found no difference between the two groups [n=2,458 children, 2,711 advocates, and 210 cases].<sup>N</sup> Lastly, results from a 2015 study on legal representation demonstrated that children with attorneys had higher rates of all exits from disposition to permanency (reunification, adoption, guardianship, or long-term custody), which researchers attributed to differences in the timing of hearings [n=804 children in Florida].<sup>V</sup> There were no significant differences in timing between removal and adjudication or adjudication and disposition. Although the children with legal representation transitioned from disposition to permanency at twice the rate of comparison children, the difference was not significant. When analyzing the transition from disposition to permanency, children with attorneys experienced all three types of exit at statistically higher rates than comparison children, and they also transitioned from disposition to termination of parental rights (TPR) at almost four times the rate of comparison children. However, they did not move from TPR to adoption finalization at a significantly different rate.<sup>V</sup> Another study noted that while timely case closure is a benefit of legal representation, it is not the only benefit; zealous advocacy may prolong cases for good reasons, such as giving parents the opportunity to show they are fit for reunification.<sup>X</sup>

Three studies (a 2004 literature review, a 1990 comparison of volunteers to attorneys [n=158], and a 2000 comparison of cases with [n=119] and without [n=81] a volunteer with all children having attorneys) reported on the number of continuances in cases, all of which indicated that there were generally no significant differences.<sup>B,K,Q</sup> However, the 2000 study analyzed outcomes for all cases and for closed cases; closed cases in which the child had both a volunteer and attorney had fewer continuances.<sup>K</sup>

### Filing of Motions

Four studies discuss the filing of legal motions and termination of parental rights petitions. Results from a MDT project in Michigan, that were evaluated in studies in 2016 and 2017, showed that mothers and fathers of children represented by the MDT had fewer TPR petitions filed [n=409 children].<sup>DD,EE</sup> In one 2015 study, the filing of legal motions and TPR petitions were two of the four main activities of attorneys providing legal representation to dependent children [n=804 children in Florida].<sup>V</sup> Results indicated that the number of motions filed in legal representation cases was 46.5% higher than in comparison cases; however, this did not result in a greater proportion of motions being denied,

indicating that the motions had merit. In another study comparing methods of delivering MDT representation in Colorado that was published in 2017, attorney GALs in multidisciplinary legal offices were more likely to file motions than independent contract GALs; the difference was not significant, but the two groups did differ in the types of motions that they were likely to file [2,458 children, 2,711 advocates, and 210 cases].<sup>N</sup>

**Approximately one-third of the studies examined advocate behavior and found that activities are affected by advocate type and training as well as client and case characteristics.** Twelve of the studies reviewed analyzed the behaviors of advocates for children in dependency proceedings. Activities identified by these studies include contact with the child and/or parents, contact with collateral contacts, review of case materials, monitoring of case progress, obtaining services for the child and/or parents, investigating alternative services for the child, and advocacy efforts on behalf of the child.

### Advocate Activities

Nine studies found that cases with volunteers (whether supporting attorneys or working independently), social worker/attorney teams, or trained attorneys engaged in more advocate activities, including home visits, contact with clients, written reports, and investigation of alternative services for children and their parents. For example, one 2003 study that compared cases with and without volunteers (all cases had attorney GALs) found differences in the number of home visits and investigation of alternative services in cases with a volunteer versus those without a volunteer [n=43 cases].<sup>L</sup> However, the study noted that there are certain critical activities that can only be performed by attorney GALs, including vigorously advocating for services and filing petitions. In one 2020 evaluation of volunteers in New York, services performed varied by age but case monitoring was the most common form of service provision, and volunteers typically assisted both the youth and their primary parents [n=566 children].<sup>J</sup> Another study published in 2010 sought to assess the quality of representation provided to children in Pennsylvania dependency proceedings [n=138 advocates].<sup>I</sup> Among other findings, the study determined that cases where attorneys work with social workers were significantly more likely to have all legal tasks completed (e.g., reviewing materials and contact with collaterals) and had higher frequency and regularity of contact with the client throughout the proceedings, including more home visits. The authors noted that the attorneys in these cases may share attorney tasks (e.g., record review and visiting child placements) with the social workers.

Two studies from 1986 and 2016 compared advocates with specialized training in areas such as assessment of child safety, evaluation of children's and family's needs, and vigorous advocacy to attorneys without such training [1986: 91 cases in Michigan; 2016: 4,274 children, 264 advocates in Georgia and Washington].<sup>G,T</sup> The studies found that advocates with specialized training engaged in more case activities, including having more interaction with clients, contacting more collaterals, and engaging in more advocacy activities. The 2016 study found that trained advocates were more likely to have family team meetings and motion hearings.<sup>T</sup> Similarly, results of two additional studies found that attorneys and support staff regularly attend non-court meetings, including staffings and case plan meetings [2015: 804 children in Florida; Oregon].<sup>25,V,Y</sup> The 2015 study reported that attorneys aggressively advocated for services for children, especially those pertaining to placement stability; attorneys also advocated for services for their clients' parents, though this was seen as more probative.<sup>V</sup> Conversely, a 2009 study of attorney GALs in Nebraska found that overall, the GALs were

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<sup>25</sup> Sample size and publication year were not reported for the Oregon study.

not visiting clients, zealously advocating for permanent placement, making clients' positions known to the court, using independent experts to assist them in understanding clients, or actively investigating clients' educational needs.<sup>AA</sup>

### Advocate Time

Seven studies examined advocate time spent on these activities. Overall, attorneys appear to spend the majority of time on legal activities, whereas volunteers and social workers spend the majority of time communicating with the child. One 2017 study looked at the activities of attorneys and found that more time was spent on legal case preparation than investigation and document review and that the greatest amount of time was spent negotiating with other parties, reviewing case plans, and reviewing court files [n=745 children and 166 advocates in Georgia and Washington].<sup>JJ</sup> A 2010 study found that public and private attorneys reported spending most of their time attending hearings, but public attorneys spent almost twice as much time as private attorneys working on the case outside of hearings [n=138 advocates in Pennsylvania].<sup>I</sup> Social workers, who worked with public attorneys in the study, reported spending most of their time visiting children and submitting paperwork to the court. Similarly, one Oregon study found that attorneys were able to exceed the program's benchmark for time spent with clients through the use of case managers.<sup>Y</sup> In a 2017 study comparing methods of delivering MDT representation in Colorado, attorney GALs in MDLOs spent an average of about 12-14 additional hours on each appointment than independent contractors; an average of 3-7 hours more was spent on cases in the first 45 days of appointment [n=2,458 children, 2,711 advocates, and 210 cases].<sup>N</sup>

A nationwide study published in 2004 found that volunteers spent the greatest amount of their time communicating with the child [n=3,774].<sup>BB</sup> Additionally, two studies published in 1986 and 2016 found that advocates with specialized training spent more time on cases than attorneys without such training, though the studies did not examine the specific activities on which time was spent [1986: 91 cases in Michigan; 2016: 4,274 children and 264 advocates in Georgia and Washington].<sup>G,T</sup>

### Advocate and Child Characteristics

One 2017 study looked at how attorney characteristics affect case activities (e.g., contact with clients and collaterals) [n=745 children and 166 attorneys in Georgia and Washington]. The study found that attorneys with less experience and smaller caseloads and those working for nonprofit law firms reported more contact with clients. The authors also found variation in activities related to client characteristics (for example, attorneys reported more contact with older female clients and those placed in kinship care).<sup>JJ</sup> In terms of client characteristics, another study published in 2020 found that services provided by volunteers varied according to client age. Volunteers were most likely to provide services in the areas of case monitoring and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children for all children; parental housing for youth ages 6 to 15; and youth education, youth housing, and health-related services for youth ages 16 to 21 [n=566 children in New York].<sup>26,J</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children is a federal agreement among states enabling the formal transfer of a child or adolescent in the foster care system from one state to another.

## **Documents from professional organizations, federal agencies, and state and local entities focused on high quality legal representation; many recommended multidisciplinary team models**

OPPAGA reviewed 45 documents from professional organizations. These entities included

- legal organizations such as the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, National Center for State Courts, and Conference of Chief Justices;
- federal agencies such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Children's Bureau/Administration for Children and Families (ACF); and
- state and local entities such as the Florida Guardian Ad Litem Program, Florida Bar Legal Needs of Children Committee, and Children's Services Council of Broward County.

The types of documents from professional organizations included professional guidelines and standards, policy statements/briefs, resolutions, comparative analyses of state programs, and policy and legislative recommendations.

Since many of the professional organizations are attorney, judicial, and court-related groups, the majority of documents OPPAGA reviewed focused on achieving high quality legal representation for children in dependency. Some of the documents are proposed standards or certification programs for attorneys representing children, while others are policy proposals supporting attorney representation for all children in dependency. While the majority of documents favor attorney advocates for all children as a minimum standard, several support volunteer or lay advocacy. Further, several report that models that combine attorney representation with volunteer or with social workers in multidisciplinary teams are preferred. Some are critical of existing models of representation such as volunteer only or client-directed attorneys for children. (See Appendix A, Exhibit A-3 for more detail.)

## APPENDIX A

### Summary of Literature on Volunteer and Legal Advocacy for Children in Dependency Proceedings

Exhibit A-1 provides an overview of the types of studies reviewed, including the type of publication, advocacy model examined, location of the study, size of the sample used for analyses, methodologies utilized, and reported limitations. In Exhibit A-2, the 37 studies included in this review are listed in chronological order and denote which outcomes were assessed in each. Lastly, Exhibit A-3 provides more detailed information on the types of documents obtained from stakeholders, associated professional organizations, federal agencies, and state and local entities, as well as links to the organizations' websites.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "[A Reluctant Post About the Guardian ad Litem Program: Its Ethics, Efficacy, & Future](#)," a 2019 blogpost by Robert Latham, was recommended by stakeholders. This information was reviewed by OPPAGA but did not meet inclusion criteria, as it is not a publication from a professional organization or peer-reviewed source.

## Exhibit A-1

### Literature Review Summary – Research Study Characteristics

Study Type	Source Type	Program Type	Geographic Location <sup>1</sup>	Sample Size Range <sup>2</sup>	Methodology <sup>3,4</sup>	Limitations <sup>3</sup>
Comparison (12)	Peer-reviewed journal (17)	Attorney representation (14)	Not specified (4)	Advocates: 40-2,711	Data/statistical analyses (25)	Issues related to evaluation design (13)
Efficacy (11)	Government entity (9)	Volunteer advocacy (14)	Texas (4)	Children: 81-31,754	Interviews (9)	Selection bias (9)
Evaluation (8)	Non-governmental organization (6)	Multidisciplinary team (3)	Michigan (3)	Cases: 43-245	Surveys (9)	Data collection limitations (8)
Literature review (4)	Law journal (3)	Multiple models (6)	Multiple states (3)		Literature review (7)	Small sample size (8)
Law review (2)	Educational institution (1)		U.S. (3)		Document review (5)	Low survey response rate (3)
	Book (1)		Washington (3)		Court observation (2)	Possible regional variation (3)
			California (2)		Focus groups (2)	Potential author/respondent bias (2)
			Florida (2)		Other (2) <sup>6</sup>	Self-reported information (2)
			Colorado		Self-report instruments (2)	
			Indiana			
			Kansas			
			Nebraska			
			Nevada			
			New York			
			Oklahoma			
			Oregon			
			Pennsylvania			
			Tennessee			

<sup>1</sup> States in which the studies took place are reported, even though the study may have occurred in a single county within the state.

<sup>2</sup> Some studies reported the number of cases included in the analysis, as opposed to the number of children. These figures have been kept separate from the number of children, as a case may have more than one child.

<sup>3</sup> Some studies have more than one methodology or limitation; these studies are counted more than once in these columns.

<sup>4</sup> Two studies did not report methodologies.

<sup>5</sup> Other includes a process audit and notes from observations of program implementation.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of literature from books, educational institutions, government entities, law journals, nongovernmental organizations, and peer-reviewed academic articles.



## Exhibit A-2

### Literature Review Summary – Research Studies by Outcomes

Author	Date	Title	Advocacy Model	Sample size <sup>1,2</sup>	Case Outcomes	Child Well-Being	Court Processes	Advocate Behavior
Duquette, Donald N. and Sarah H. Ramsey	1986	Using Lay Volunteers to Represent Children in Child Protection Court Proceedings	Attorneys without specialized training (control group); attorneys, volunteers, and law students with specialized training (demonstration group)	Control group: 38 cases Demonstration groups: 53 cases	✓	✓	✓	✓
Condelli, Larry	1988	National Evaluation of the Impact of Guardians ad Litem in Child Abuse or Neglect Judicial Proceedings	Private attorney, staff attorney, law student, volunteer and staff attorney team, and volunteer only	245 cases	✓	✓	✓	
Poertner, John and Allan Press	1990	Who Best Represents the Interests of the Child in Court?	Volunteer and staff attorney	Volunteer cases: 60 Staff attorney cases: 98	✓	✓	✓	
Abramson, Shareem	1991	Use of Court-Appointed Special Advocates to Assist in Permanency Planning for Minority Children	Volunteer and no volunteer; attorney status not reported	Volunteer families: 28, 60 children Comparison families: 28, 62 children	✓	✓		
Leung, Patrick	1996	Is the Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program Effective? A Longitudinal Analysis of Time Involvement in Case Outcomes	Volunteer and no volunteer; study reports volunteers provided information to agency staff attorneys but the relationship was not clarified	Children with volunteer: 66 Children without volunteer: 107 Children referred to but not assigned a volunteer: 24	✓		✓	
Calkins, Cynthia A. and Murray Millar	1999	The Effectiveness of Court Appointed Special Advocates to Assist in Permanency Planning	Volunteer and no volunteer; attorney status not reported	Children with volunteer: 68 Children without volunteer: 121	✓			
Litzelfelner, Pat	2000	The Effectiveness of CASAs in Achieving Positive Outcomes for Children	Volunteer and no volunteer; all cases had attorney GALs	Cases with volunteer: 119 Cases with no volunteer: 81	✓	✓	✓	
Weisz, Victoria and Nghi Thai	2003	The Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program: Bringing Information to Child Abuse and Neglect Cases	Volunteer and no volunteer; all cases had attorney GALs	Children with volunteer: 21 Children with no volunteer: 22				✓
Caliber Associates	2004	Evaluation of CASA Representation, Final Report	Volunteer and no volunteer; attorney status not reported	3,774 children	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youngclarke, Davin, Kathleen Dyer Ramos, and Lorraine Granger-Merkle	2004	A Systematic Review of the Impact of Court Appointed Special Advocates	Varied by study	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓
U. S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, Audit Division	2006	National Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program: Audit Report 07-04	Volunteer and no volunteer; attorney status not reported	N/A	✓	✓		

Author	Date	Title	Advocacy Model	Sample size <sup>1,2</sup>	Case Outcomes	Child Well-Being	Court Processes	Advocate Behavior
Goodman, Gail S., Robin S. Edelstein, Emilie B. Mitchell, and John E.B. Myers	2008	A Comparison of Types of Attorney Representation for Children in California Juvenile Court Dependency Cases	County-affiliated (public defenders, prosecutors, county counsel) and independent (private firms, panel of court-appointed attorneys) legal representation	27,807 children in foster care	✓			
Zinn, Andrew E. and Jack Slowriver	2008	Expediting Permanency: Legal Representation for Foster Children in Palm Beach County	Attorney and no attorney; volunteer status not reported	FCP children: 1,496 Comparison children: 905	✓	✓	✓	
Pitchal, Erik S., Madelyn D. Freundlich, and Corene Kendrick	2009	Evaluation of the Guardian ad Litem System in Nebraska	GAL attorneys	N/A	✓		✓	✓
Waxman, Hersch C., W. Robert Houston, Susan M. Profilet, and Betsi Sanchez	2009	The Long-Term Effects of the Houston Child Advocates, Inc., Program on Children and Family Outcomes	Volunteer and no volunteer; attorney status not reported	Total children: 581 Children with volunteer: 327	✓	✓		
Brennan, Kathy, Dee Wilson, Tom George, and Oma McLaughlin	2010	Washington State Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Evaluation Report	Volunteer, CASA staff, contract GAL, mixed (cases that transferred from volunteer to CASA staff or vice versa), and no volunteer or GAL (children assigned to an attorney were categorized as “no volunteer or GAL”)	3,013 dependent children, 48% represented by volunteers, 18% represented by CASA staff, and about 11% represented by each of the following: contract GALs, mixed representation, and no volunteer or GAL	✓	✓		
Johnston-Walsh, Lucy, Susan Kinnevy, Alan M. Lerner, and Jennifer Pokempner	2010	Assessing the Quality of Child Advocacy in Dependency Proceedings in Pennsylvania	Attorneys	Attorneys: 99 Social workers: 39				✓
Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families	2011	Legal Representation Study: Assessment of Appointed Representation in Texas Child-Protection Proceedings	Attorneys	Attorneys: 94 Youth: 51 surveyed, 30 interviewed	✓	✓	✓	
Peters, Clark and John Walsh	2012	Fiscal Returns on Improved Representation of Children in Dependency Court: The State of the Evidence	Varied by study	N/A	✓		✓	
Lawson, Jennifer and Jill Duerr Berrick	2013	Establishing CASA as an Evidence-Based Practice	Varied by study	N/A	✓	✓	✓	
Pilkay, Stefanie and Sungkyu Lee	2015	Effects of Court-Appointed Special Advocate Intervention on Permanency Outcomes of Children in Foster Care	Volunteer and no volunteer; attorney status not specified	Total children: 304 Children with volunteer: 129	✓		✓	
Zinn, Andrew and Clark Peters	2015	Expressed-Interest Legal Representation for Children in Substitute Care:	Attorney and no attorney; volunteer status not reported	FCP-referred children: 804 Children denied FCP: 93	✓		✓	✓

Author	Date	Title	Advocacy Model	Sample size <sup>1,2</sup>	Case Outcomes	Child Well-Being	Court Processes	Advocate Behavior
		Evaluation of the Impact of Representation on Children's Permanency Outcomes						
LeVezu, Alicia	2016	Defending Our Children: A Child's Access to Justice in Washington State	Client-directed attorney only, volunteer or best-interest attorney only, and client-directed attorney/volunteer team	Children observed: 872		✓	✓	
Orlebeke, Britany, Xiaomeng Zhou, Ada Skyles, and Andrew Zinn	2016	Evaluation of the QIC-ChildRep Best Practices Model Training for Attorneys Representing Children in the Child Welfare System	Attorney with specialized training and attorney without specialized training	<u>Washington:</u> Attorneys – 118 Children – 1,956 <u>Georgia:</u> Attorneys – 146 Children – 2,318 <u>Total treatment attorneys:</u> 131	✓			✓
Pott, Robbin	2016	The Flint MDT Study: A Description and Evaluation of a Multidisciplinary Team Representing Children in Child Welfare	Multidisciplinary team and single attorney	Families: 216 Children: 409	✓	✓	✓	
Colorado Office of the Child's Representative	2017	Evaluation of Multidisciplinary Law Office Pilot Project	Multidisciplinary team representation provided through a either a multidisciplinary law office or independent contracted attorneys	Multidisciplinary legal offices surveyed: 381 Comparison contractor attorneys surveyed: 258 All statewide independent contractors surveyed: 2009 Child records: 2,418 (1,845 children with MDLO attorneys; 573 children with independent contract attorneys) Focus group: 17 youth Youth surveys: 23 Case file review: 210 Stakeholder survey (GALs and social service professionals): 63	✓		✓	✓
Pott, Robbin	2017	Delivering Social Work Services in Collaboration with the Legal Representation for Individual Clients: An Effective, Ethical and Economical Approach to Supporting Families in Child Abuse and Neglect Legal Proceedings	Multidisciplinary team and single attorney	N/A	✓	✓	✓	

Author	Date	Title	Advocacy Model	Sample size <sup>1,2</sup>	Case Outcomes	Child Well-Being	Court Processes	Advocate Behavior
Zinn, Andrew and Britany Orlebeke	2017	The Nature and Determinants of Child Representation Practice in Child Welfare Cases	Attorney with specialized training and attorney without specialized training	<u>Washington:</u> Attorneys – 94 Children – 509 <u>Georgia:</u> Attorneys – 72 Children – 236				✓
Public Defense Services Commission, Office of Public Defense Services	n.d.	Parent Child Representation Program Annual Report 2016-2017	Counties with parent and child representation programs and statewide average	Not reported	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gershun, Martha and Claire Terrebone	2018	Child Welfare System Interventions on Behalf of Children and Families: Highlighting the Role of Court Appointed Special Advocates	Varied by study	N/A	✓	✓		
Gueinzus, Anne Tyler and Eikoku Ikeno	2019	Legal Representation for Abused and Neglected Youth	Varied by study	N/A	✓	✓	✓	
Osborne, Cynthia, Hilary Warner-Doe, McKenna LeClear, and Holly Sexton	2019	The Effect of CASA on Child Welfare Permanency Outcomes	Volunteer and no volunteer; attorney status not specified	31,754 children in foster care; 56.2% received a volunteer	✓			
Stanley, Jessica and Chan M. Hellman	2019	Nurturing Hope Among Children Experiencing Abuse and Neglect: Examining the Effects of CASA Volunteers	Volunteer	280 children		✓		
Katz, Colleen Cary, Kerry Moles, Peggy Grauwiler, and Sloan Silverman Post	2020	The Context-Specific Service Provision of CASA	Volunteer	Average number of surveys completed in each quarter of data collection for youth: Age 0-5: 182 Age 6-15: 294 Age 16-21: 90		✓		✓
McCurley, Carl and Jill Malat	2020	Evaluation of Dependent Child Legal Representation: Interim Report	Counties practicing or not practicing standards based legal representation	Treatment group: 668 Comparison group: 448	✓			
Kelsey, Katherine Meger	2021	A Child's Right to Counsel: The Case for Indiana to Craft Its Own Framework	Varied by study	N/A	✓		✓	
Supreme Court of Texas Children's Commission	2021	Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation: Final Report	Varied by state examined	N/A	✓		✓	

<sup>1</sup> Information in this column only includes sample sizes for children, cases, or advocates in the analyses; other types of sample sizes, such as the number of counties evaluated or the number of articles evaluated for a literature review, are not included.

<sup>2</sup> Some studies reported the number of cases included in the analysis, as opposed to the number of children. These figures have been kept separate from the number of children, as a case may have more than one child.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of literature from books, educational institutions, government entities, law journals, nongovernmental organizations, and peer-reviewed academic articles.

### Exhibit A-3

#### Professional Organizations Provide a Variety of Types of Information Regarding Advocacy for Children in Court Proceedings

Name of Organization	Organization Type	Description of Information Related to Child Advocacy	Year Information Provided
<a href="#">Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA)</a>	Independent national leadership organization	- <b>Policy statement</b> calling for legal representation of children in all child protection cases and integrated and coordinated services and programs for families in the child welfare system	2017
		- <b>Resolution</b> calling for increased support for GAL and CASA programs	2001
<a href="#">Conference of Chief Justices</a>	Leadership organization of the highest judicial officers of U.S. states, commonwealth, and territories	- Joint <b>resolution</b> with COSCA calling for effective representation for children by trained attorneys and advocates	2004
		- Joint <b>resolution</b> with COSCA recognizing critical importance of legal representation for children in child abuse and neglect proceedings and encouraging members to consider authorizing the Child Welfare Attorney Specialty Certification Program	2008
		- Joint <b>resolution</b> with COSCA recognizing that CASAs provide courts with critical information to assist in making decisions that are in the best interests of the child and resolving to urge federal reauthorization of federal funding of CASA programs	2018
<a href="#">Texas Public Policy Foundation</a>	Nonprofit research institute	- <b>Performance report</b> that ranks states on how well they meet certain goals and how they compare to other states on child welfare outcomes such as safety, permanency, and stability	2020
<a href="#">National Center for State Courts</a>	Nonprofit court improvement organization	- <b>Professional guidance</b> for the legal and judicial community for ensuring the well-being of children and their families	2019
<a href="#">University of Florida Levin College of Law. Center on Children and Families</a>	Interdisciplinary center at an academic institution	- Joint publication with <b>descriptive information</b> on the current system of representation of dependent children in Florida	2012
<a href="#">Florida's Children First</a>	Nonprofit child advocacy organization	- <b>Performance report</b> that evaluates state laws throughout the 50 states and the District of Columbia relating to the legal representation of children in civil child abuse and neglect proceedings; reports that high quality legal representation is associated with better outcomes and shorter times in care for children in dependency cases	2019
<a href="#">First Star Institute</a>	Nonprofit child advocacy organization		
<a href="#">Children's Advocacy Institute, University of San Diego School of Law</a>	Nonprofit academic, research, and advocacy organization		
<a href="#">National Coalition for Child Protection Reform</a>	Nonprofit advocacy organization	- <b>Commentary</b> on the case against CASAs	2010, updated in 2019
		- <b>Update to the 2010 commentary</b> on the case against CASAs	2021
<a href="#">Support Center for Child Advocates</a>	Legal assistance and social service advocacy organization	- <b>Report</b> with information on caseloads, demographics, and outcomes for abused and neglected children served by the program	FY 2019-20
<a href="#">Family Justice Initiative</a>	Partnership of multiple legal and family advocacy organizations	- <b>Professional guidance</b> for developers and operators of legal representation programs for parents and children in the dependency system on how to evaluate impacts of programs on outcomes	Accessed 8/12/21

Name of Organization	Organization Type	Description of Information Related to Child Advocacy	Year Information Provided
		- <b>Literature review</b> of articles pertaining to child representation <sup>1</sup>	Accessed 9/14/21
		- <b>Professional guidance</b> on effective in-court advocacy for attorneys that represent children or parents in child welfare proceedings	2021
		- <b>Professional guidance</b> for attorneys representing children and parents in child welfare proceedings	2017
<a href="#">Association of Family and Conciliation Courts</a>	Interdisciplinary family court professional association	- <b>Professional guidance</b> for attorneys, GALs, and CASAs representing children	2012
<a href="#">National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)</a>	Judicial membership organization	- <b>Professional guidance</b> for child welfare court standards and practices	2016
		- <b>Professional guidance</b> on the benefits of high quality legal representation for children	2018
<a href="#">American Bar Association (ABA) Center on Children and the Law</a>	Grant-funded entity within the ABA Center for Public Interest Law	- <b>Standards of practice</b> for attorney representation of children	2018
		- <b>Professional guidance</b> to improve access, utilization, and support for attorneys appointed to represent children both when appointed as legal counsel and when appointed as a GAL	1998
<a href="#">Florida Bar Foundation</a>	Nonprofit legal organization	- <b>Policy recommendations</b> for achieving 100% legal representation for children in Florida	2008
<a href="#">The Florida Bar Commission on the Legal Needs of Children</a>	Special commission of the Florida Bar	- <b>Final report and policy recommendations</b> on the legal needs of children and proposed solutions to address unmet legal needs of children	2002
<a href="#">The Florida Bar Legal Needs of Children Committee</a>	Special committee of the Florida Bar	- <b>Legislative recommendations</b> to create the Statewide Office of the Child Advocate and professional guidance on legal representation for children	2009
		- <b>Professional guidance</b> for attorneys representing parents and children in dependency case proceedings	FY 2020-21
<a href="#">The Florida Bar Special Committee on Child and Parent Representation</a>	Special committee of the Florida Bar	- <b>Legislative and administrative recommendations</b> to create the Statewide Office of Dependency Representation and expand the eligibility for dependent children's right to counsel	FY 2017-18
<a href="#">U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USHHS). Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children's Bureau</a>	Federal partnership with ABA, NCJFCJ, National Association of Counsel for Children, Public Knowledge, and Westat	- <b>Agency memos</b> to urge state and tribal Title IV-E agencies, courts, administrative offices of the courts, and Court Improvement Programs to work together to ensure parents, children and youth, and child welfare agencies receive high quality legal representation at all stages of child welfare proceedings	2017, 2021
<a href="#">USHHS, ACF Children's Bureau, Capacity Building Center for Courts</a>	Federal agency	- <b>Research brief</b> that summarizes available research on quality legal representation for parents and children	2020
<a href="#">USHHS, ACF, Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Information Gateway</a>	Federal agency	- <b>Information</b> on organizations that provide information about child abuse and neglect and child welfare advocacy and public policy	Accessed 9/8/21
		- <b>Information</b> on organizations that provide information on child welfare legal issues for legal, court, and agency professionals serving children and families	Accessed 9/7/21
<a href="#">Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention</a>	Federal agency	- <b>Professional guidance</b> for CASA performance measures and outcomes	2020
		- <b>Professional guidance</b> for performance measures in child abuse and neglect cases	2019

Name of Organization	Organization Type	Description of Information Related to Child Advocacy	Year Information Provided
		- <b>Grant program</b> for CASA training, technical assistance, and subgrants	2021
<a href="#">National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in Child Welfare (QIC-ChildRep)</a>	Federally-funded research center housed at University of Michigan Law School	- <b>Report</b> that summarizes the development of a best practice model and associated research and demonstration projects that studied child representation models	2009-2016 Activities Report
<a href="#">Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care</a>	State agency (WA)	- The Children's Representation Workgroup commissioned to provide <b>recommendations on standards of practice</b> for attorneys representing youth in dependency proceedings	Accessed 9/7/21
		- <b>Professional guidance and best practices</b> for dependency judges, including support for volunteer representation	2012
<a href="#">Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid, Children's Representation Program</a>	State agency (WA)	- <b>Professional guidance and benchmarks</b> for attorneys appointed for children who remain dependent six months following termination of parental rights	Accessed 8/13/21
<a href="#">Washington Administrative Office of the Courts, State Center for Court Research</a>	State agency (WA)	- <b>Research brief</b> provided to the Washington State Legislature on a study by the Office of Civil Legal Aid and the Washington State Center for Court Research on a comparative study assessing impact and potential costs savings associated with appointment of attorneys for children in dependency cases	2020
<a href="#">Pennsylvania State Roundtable Legal Representation Workgroup</a>	State agency (PA)	- <b>Standards of practice</b> for attorneys representing children and parents in dependency proceedings	2015
		- <b>Report</b> that provides recommendations on standards of practice to ensure competent trained legal counsel for children and parents	2015
<a href="#">Florida Guardian Ad Litem Program</a>	State agency (FL)	- <b>Analysis</b> of the 2008 Chapin Hall Center for Children's study of the Foster Children's Project and analysis of the associated 2015 follow-up article	Accessed 9/13/21
<a href="#">Partnership for Strong Families</a>	Local nonprofit child welfare organization	- <b>Professional guidance</b> on preferred qualities for attorneys in problem solving courts	Accessed 9/10/21
		- <b>Information</b> on survey results from legal representation survey	2020
		- <b>Requests for proposals</b> for grant funding to provide legal advocacy and support services for children in the dependency system, including proposals specific to crossover youth and children raised by relative or non-relative caregivers	2010 FY 2014-15 FY 2016-17 FY 2020-21
<a href="#">Children's Services Council of Broward County</a>	Local government independent taxing authority	- <b>Annual reports</b> with information on legal representation and legal supports provided in Broward County	FY 2017-18 FY 2018-19 FY 2019-20

Source: OPPAGA analysis of information from state and national professional societies and organizations, state and federal agencies, state community-based care organizations, and nonprofit advocacy/research organizations as identified by OPPAGA and recommended to OPPAGA by stakeholders.



## APPENDIX B

### Endnotes for Literature Cited on Volunteer and Legal Advocacy for Children in Dependency Proceedings

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