

Research Overview

This comprehensive study, conducted by Fairmont State University, analyzed three years (2019-2021) of federally reported statewide child welfare data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDCANS). The research examined the relationship between CASA involvement and child welfare outcomes across West Virginia counties, employing moderation analysis to understand how CASA programs influence case goal achievement.

Key Findings

The data derived from this study presents compelling evidence that CASA programs effectively mitigate the adverse effects of abuse and neglect within the child welfare system. This research supports the case for sustainable funding and program expansion to serve more vulnerable children across West Virginia's foster care system.

In counties with strong CASA involvement, the likelihood of achieving case goals increases.

The odds of achieving a case goal exponentially increase for every additional child served by CASA.

CASA's presence offsets the detrimental effects of neglect.

CASA's Demonstrated Impact

Counties with robust CASA programs show marked improvements in child outcomes.

In jurisdictions where CASA serves 300+ children annually:

- Single abuse report cases: **Success rates increase from 12% to 27%**
- Multiple abuse report cases: **Success rates increase from 3% to 25%**
- Single neglect report cases: **Success rates increase from 15% to 34%**
- Multiple neglect report cases: **Success rates increase from 7% to 38%**

The research reveals two important measurements of CASA's effectiveness:

- **Direct Impact** - Each additional child served by CASA increases the likelihood of positive outcomes by 0.2%, with exponential improvements in counties maintaining robust programs. This number demonstrates a consistent positive trend across all counties.
- **Scaling Effect** - **The impact grows significantly in counties with established programs:**
 - o Programs serving 170+ children effectively neutralize the negative effects of abuse.
 - o Programs serving 105+ children counteract the effects of neglect.
 - o Programs serving 300+ children show the most dramatic improvements

Resource Allocation Impact

Counties investing over \$170,000 in CASA programming demonstrate statistically significant improvements in child welfare outcomes, particularly in cases involving substantiated abuse. This correlation suggests that adequate resource allocation is crucial for program effectiveness.