

**Evaluation of Collaborative Family Engagement** 

Year Four Report

To increase family engagement in Texas, Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) created the Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) process in 2015 with funding from the 84th Texas Legislature.

Texas CASA and DFPS have continued to roll out CFE across Texas, and as of the end of FY 2019, 31 local CASA programs in Texas are implementing CFE.

The primary purpose of CFE is to develop a lifetime network of support for children and families, with a focus on increasing collaboration between CPS and CASA. The aim is to improve child wellbeing, placement, as well as relational and legal permanency outcomes for children in CPS care.



"It was a joy to attend the child's 5th birthday party, the week she was reunited with her family, where over 30 extended family members attended. In my opinion, this reunification would not have happened without the CFE process."







# **EFE** in Action

## **COLLABORATE**

CASA and CPS coordinate more to plan for the case and build the child's support network.

## **CULTIVATE**

CASA and CPS place more emphasis on finding and engaging connections, often using tools provided by CFE.

#### CONVENE

More connections participate in the planning and decision-making process.

#### CONNECT

Connections provide more support to children, parents and caregivers.



More CFE leads to more frequent and better quality communications between CASA and CPS.



CASA programs used search tools on 38.7% of cases with more CFE compared to only 14.6% on cases without CFE.



22.8% of cases with more CFE report having 6 or more connections attend meetings compared to only 10.4% of cases with less CFE.



On cases with more CFE, nearly 75% have support provided to children once a month or more, compared to 62.5% for less CFE cases.



On cases with more CFE, 67.8% of CASA volunteers report planning for next steps together with CPS, compared to only 25.2% when less CFE is used.



More CFE leads to an increased emphasis and importance on family engagement among CASA volunteers.



On cases with more CFE, family planning meetings reported having 57% extended family and 51.3% fictive kin in attendance, compared to 40.7% and 42.5% on less CFE cases.



On cases with more CFE, 58% of parents receive support at least once per month, compared to 46% for less CFE cases.



More CFE leads to increased collaboration and a better working relationship with CASA and CPS.



On cases with more CFE, CASA volunteers take on more responsibility of family searching and engagement, preserving CPS caseworkers' time for other critical case tasks.



At least one connection made a plan to support the child, parent or caregiver at 90% of Family Meetings.



32% of cases with more CFE report that the child has 6 or more connections, and 7 out of 10 cases have at least 3 connections.

# **OUTCOMES**

- Support for parents increases with more CFE.
- Children have more connections on cases with more CFE.
- More children on TMC cases with more CFE move from non-kin into kin placements compared to children on cases with less CFE.

