



CASA & CAC SERVICES DURING COVID -19

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CASA & CACs

LHHS PRESENTATION

- ✓ What CASAs and CACs do in "normal" times
- ✓ *What CASAs have been doing during COVID -19*
- ✓ *Gaps in services and ability to carry out services*



CASA “NORMAL” SERVICES

- CASA advocates ONLY for the foster child
- Judge appoints CASA
- CASAs recruit, train, & supervise vols
- CASA vols attending hearings with kids and provide support to bio and foster parents
- Educational advocacy and support
- “eyes and ears” on kids
- Overview of numbers:
 - 2400 kids in foster care in NM
 - 600 vols currently serving 1,600 kids;
 - 800 kids currently need CASAs

CASA SERVICES DURING COVID

- Sometimes the only entity that has eyes and ears on these kids
- More cases & cases are more intense “grotesque physical, sexual abuse, trafficking”
- More referrals from law enforcement instead of educators and health care professionals
- Tutoring & providing educational advocacy
- Meeting basic needs/Picking up the pieces: food delivery, clothing, school supplies, water
- Training kids, foster and bio families to use video for visits and hearings
- Problem solving for no internet
- Increased vol recruitment
- Facilitating video court appearances

CAC “NORMAL” SERVICES

- Assisting law enf & CYFD in investigations of child abuse
- Forensic interviewing
- Sexual Assault exams
- Multi Disciplinary Team
- Victim advocacy
- Therapy
- Building community awareness/community education
- Train school personnel

CAC SERVICES DURING COVID

- Actively checking on kids
 - Less referrals from teachers, medical providers, increased from law enf
 - Child sexual abusers able to hide the abuse more effectively
 - Shool cameras off or only on faces
- More support to families: Families are more overwhelmed
- Increased victim advocacy needs
- Increased case management needs dramatically increased
- Technology gapsvirtual therapy
- Facilitating court services

SERVICE GAPS THAT CASAs & CACs ARE FILLING



- Need more volunteer coordinators to recruit more volunteers
- Increased training for doing so many aspects of the job on video medium
- Meeting with kids every week: Many times the ONLY eyes and ears
- Training kids, foster and bio families to use video for visits and hearings
- Problem solving when no internet/broadband
- Laptops and hot spots for families
- Getting clothes, school supplies, food, water
- Educational support & advocacy
- Transporting kids

CASA & CAC KIDS' NEEDS

1. No COVID relief funding for services (PPP for some, but that's for employee paychecks)
2. Plexiglass
3. Video platforms
4. Hot spots
5. Online fundraising training
6. training training training - law enforcement, MDT
7. Heightened violence in cases
8. Families need additional support to walk through this crisis - eyes and ears in the home
9. Increased advocacy to reach out to families that are identifying high risk - in homes, coaching families, getting them the resources they need - Home Visitation and CACs

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

Carrie-Leigh

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