



A Collaborative Experience: Legal Aid Society of Mid NY and the Child Advocacy Center of Cayuga County

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- ▶ Provide background on how we were able to obtain an in-house attorney within our Child Advocacy Center
 - ▶ Provide an overview of the services an attorney is able to offer our clients
 - ▶ Discuss the trends/needs within our Children Affected by Substance Abuse (CASA) Program
 - ▶ Discuss the benefits of having an attorney at our CAC
 - ▶ Success stories

Background

- ▶ Secured funding through New York State's Office of Victim Services to have a full time attorney located at our agency
- ▶ As a result of that funding, each program that is co-located within our Advocacy center now had access to free legal consultation
- ▶ All legal services are free and confidential to clients
- ▶ Clients have to live within Cayuga County

Services Offered

- ▶ Our Staff Attorney from the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc., who is on site at our CAC four days a week, can provide legal information, advice, referrals and representation in civil (non-criminal) legal matters including:
 - ▶ Orders of Protection
 - ▶ Family Court Matters
 - ▶ Campus Administrative Protection
 - ▶ Housing
 - ▶ Immigration assistance
 - ▶ Intervention with creditors, law enforcement, and other entities on behalf of victims of identity theft and financial fraud
 - ▶ Intervention with administrative agencies/schools/colleges

Children Affected by Substance Abuse (CASA) Program

- ▶ The CASA Program goal is to develop and execute a multidisciplinary coordinated response to children who are victims of their caregivers substance abuse and the opioid epidemic with the creation of non-existing services for children and youth up to age 18 and their non-offending caregivers.
- ▶ The CASA Team is composed of:
 - ▶ Emily Hitchcock, Program Coordinator
 - ▶ Deb Riester, CASA therapist
 - ▶ Kim Greco, CASA Advocate and Outreach Specialist

Needs within the CASA program

- ▶ 90% of the legal aid referrals from CASA are involving kinship families
- ▶ Legal Services we have provided:
 - ▶ Visitations
 - ▶ Order of Protections
 - ▶ Custody, Harassment
 - ▶ Housing
 - ▶ Legal Name Changes
 - ▶ Legal Guardianship

Benefits

- ▶ Our clients come to one place to get their needs met
- ▶ Worry about financial costs of legal fees is removed
- ▶ The team is able to coordinate and communicate easily
- ▶ The role of the advocate

Success Stories

- ▶ Female Caregiver, age 74
 - ▶ Referred to CASA through WIC
 - ▶ Caregiver was raising her 15 month old grandson as her son was incarcerated due to drug use
 - ▶ Diagnosed with terminal cancer
 - ▶ Needing assistance in obtaining an appropriate legal guardian for her grandson
- ▶ Female Caregiver, 32 years old
 - ▶ Referred to the CASA program through the local Domestic Violence Shelter
 - ▶ Endured physical, verbal, and emotional abuse by her husband and had a 10 year old son
 - ▶ CASA and Legal Aid were able to help her with custody, obtaining a job and housing, physical health needs, and therapy..