



Children's Commission.

Jurist in Residence Letter:

For Judges Handling Child Protective Services Cases

November 17, 2017

Request for Assistance with Children's Commission Mediator Survey

In January of 2018, the Children's Commission will begin a comprehensive update of its 2011 study of the legal representation provided to parents and children in the Texas child welfare system. The study is designed to measure how legal representation is working from the perspective of the many different stakeholders who interact with attorneys for parents and children. The data will be collected through voluntary surveys specifically designed for the following groups: judges, court coordinators, CPS caseworkers, CASAs, youth, biological parents, prosecutors, court-appointed attorneys, relative caregivers, and foster parents.

The Children's Commission would also like to survey mediators who mediate child welfare cases. Mediators have regular and significant contact with attorneys for parents and children, but offer a perspective that is distinct from both the courtroom and the case work environment. However, identifying this particular population for the purposes of our survey is difficult because there is no statewide organization of mediators in child welfare cases through which we could request assistance with administering a survey.

If you refer CPS cases to mediators in your jurisdiction, we would greatly appreciate your help in identifying them so that we can enlist their participation in our efforts. There are two ways to assist. Please send an email to the Children's Commission mailbox with the contact information of mediators who you suggest that we survey or please forward this letter to your mediators so that they can email the Children's Commission's mailbox with their contact information. The email address to use is children@txcourts.gov. Either way, we will follow up with the mediators about the legal representation survey. Thank you very much for your assistance with this important part of our study, and please stay tuned for the judicial survey which you should receive early next year.



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