



Children's Commission

Jurist in Residence Letter:

For Judges Handling Child Protective Services Cases

March 20, 2018

Legal Representation Survey

The Supreme Court of Texas Children's Commission is implementing a comprehensive study of the legal representation provided to parents and children in child protection cases. The goal of the study is to capture the most accurate picture possible of how legal representation of parents and children in CPS cases is currently functioning across the state and how it might be improved. To meet this goal, the study will survey key stakeholders, including judges, regarding their experiences and their perspectives on the legal representation provided to parents and children. A report of the study's findings will be delivered to the Texas Legislature in September, 2018.

Judges who hear child protection cases not only have a front row seat to attorney performance, they also have important insight into how the gears of the representation system fit together. The survey seeks to quantify how judges assess the current quality of representation, what barriers they might identify to improving the quality of legal representation, and how managing attorney representation systems informs their views on the possibilities for systemic change in Texas' current legal representation model in child protection cases.

The judicial survey is now open and will close at midnight on April 6, 2018. The survey can be completed online in approximately 10-15 minutes. Answers will be anonymous and the survey will not collect any identifying information (including IP addresses) about the attorneys, the judges, the parents, or the children involved. To take the survey, please click on the link below and select "judge" when prompted:

<http://bit.ly/CC-LRS-Professionals-Survey>

Additionally, the Commission is requesting judicial assistance with distributing the surveys to parents, relatives, and mediators. These stakeholders are much more challenging to reach than other stakeholders, but their experiences are just as valuable.

For survey distribution to mediators:

If you use mediation as part of your child protection docket, it would be greatly appreciated if you could please forward the above survey link to any mediators who you utilize.

For survey distribution to parents and to relative caregivers:

Flyers to announce the surveys to parents and relatives are available online in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) and are attached to this message. The flyer explains the nature and purpose of the study and how to access the surveys. If possible for your courtroom, printing copies of these flyers and making them available where parents and relatives are likely to see them, would help to ensure that these perspectives are represented in the aggregate survey results.

If you should have any questions about any of the surveys, need assistance in providing copies of the flyer, or would like additional materials to help publicize the surveys in your court room, please email children@txcourts.gov. Thank you for your time and for everything you do on behalf of Texas children and families in the child welfare system.



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