



COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE Job Description

A CASA IS:

Court Appointed Special Advocates are specially trained community volunteers appointed by Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Judges to speak in the best interest of children who are brought before the court for reasons of abuse or neglect.

The CASA is an official part of the judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys, social workers and other professionals. By handling only two or three cases at a time, the CASA has time to thoroughly explore the history of each assigned case.

The Advocate talks with the child, parents, family members, neighbors, school officials, doctors and others involved in the child's life who might have facts about the case. The Advocate reviews all court facts about the case and all court documents pertaining to the case. The Advocate is then expected to submit formal reports to the Judge at every scheduled hearing/review. The CASA continues to monitor the case to assure that the judicial and child welfare systems are moving ahead to secure a safe, permanent home for the child, and that court-ordered services are provided to the child and family. The CASA can be an invaluable resource for the attorney for the child and social worker in reaching their goals for permanency.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Investigate, Research, and Interview
 - Complete an intensive independent review of each case
 - Speak with the child and all relevant adults (parents, family members, school officials, doctors, and others involved in the child's life who might have facts about the case)
 - Research and review appropriate records and reports
 - Conduct independent and objective analysis concerning abused and neglected children
- Help Keep the Child Safe, Observe and Monitor Services
 - Visit with the child physically at least once every thirty (30) days
 - Observe the child in their environment and interactions with those who are a part of the child's life and potentially their future
 - Monitor the court's orders for compliance by all parties
 - Ensure that court-ordered services are provided to the child and family
- Attend All Hearings and Meetings
 - Attend all court hearings to see that all relevant facts are presented
 - Provide advocacy for abused and neglected children who are the subject of judicial proceedings
 - Attend appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child
 - Participate in family planning meetings concerning the child
 - Ensure that the judicial and child welfare systems are moving ahead to secure a safe, permanent home for the child
 - Factually and objectively report findings and observations to the court
 - Insure representation of the child's best interest in all judicial proceedings
- Take Notes, write reports for the Court
 - Report findings to the court by submitting formal reports to the judge at every scheduled hearing/review
 - Provide a written report containing independent, factual information concerning the child and the child's case to the CASA office five business days prior to every hearing
 - Provide advocacy for abused and neglected children who are the subject of judicial proceedings
 - Ensure representation of the child's best interests at all meetings and hearings

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- Consult **monthly** with CASA Program Staff concerning assigned case, develop a CASA case plan and review progress and reports.
- Submit an activity log on the first week of each month.

- Return all files, notes, reports etc. on the child's case when you are no longer on the child's case.

REQUIRED SKILLS/ABILITIES:

- Ability to keep all client and court information confidential
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds (economic, cultural, educational) in a variety of settings
- Ability to transport self to a variety of locations
- Ability to deal with hostility, anger and other emotional attitudes
- Ability to maintain objectivity
- Ability to gather and record factual information accurately
- A basic understanding of child development
- A basic understanding of family relationships

TRAINING:

- Advocates are required to attend approximately 30 hours of pre-service training
- Advocates will complete 12 hours of continuing education annually
- Advocates follow guidelines established by the National CASA Association, Dept. of Criminal Justice Services and CASA CIS
- Advocates will attend in-service training and receive direction supervision and guidance from program staff

TIME COMMITMENT:

- Advocates are required to commit themselves to their case until closure
- Advocates are required to attend all court hearings on their case
- Advocates are expected to be available for case assignments upon completion of pre-service training.

BENEFITS OF BEING AN ADVOCATE:

- Although we cannot provide you with monetary rewards, there are many benefits to being a CASA/GAL volunteer. These include but are not limited to the opportunity to:
- Make a difference in the life and future of a child who has been a victim of abuse and/or neglect
- Help a child find permanency in a safe, loving home
- Assist judges in obtaining a clear picture of a child's life and needs
- Gain an understanding of family courts, legal proceedings, and social service agencies
- Develop/utilize communication skills
- Develop/utilize assertiveness
- Utilize your past experience/skills
- Form friendships with like-minded individuals

CONCLUSION:

CASA CIS has been appointing specially trained volunteers to abused and neglected children since 1994. Currently, CASA CIS is serving over 500 children in 2 Court jurisdictions (Greater Prince William including Manassas City and Manassas Park and Fauquier which encompasses Fauquier, Rappahannock and Loudoun Counties). CASA plays an integral part in assuring that children do not become lost in our court system and that permanency laws are followed.

Early contact with children who become involved in the Virginia court as a result of abused and/or neglect can help to prevent future involvement either as a delinquent or an offending adult. The CASA program is dedicated to the premise that all children are entitled to grow up in a safe and loving home. The CASA program is committed to reunification of child/children with their biological family, when that home can be made safe for the child/children. Most important is the CASA's role in ensuring that all decisions regarding the child are in their best interest.