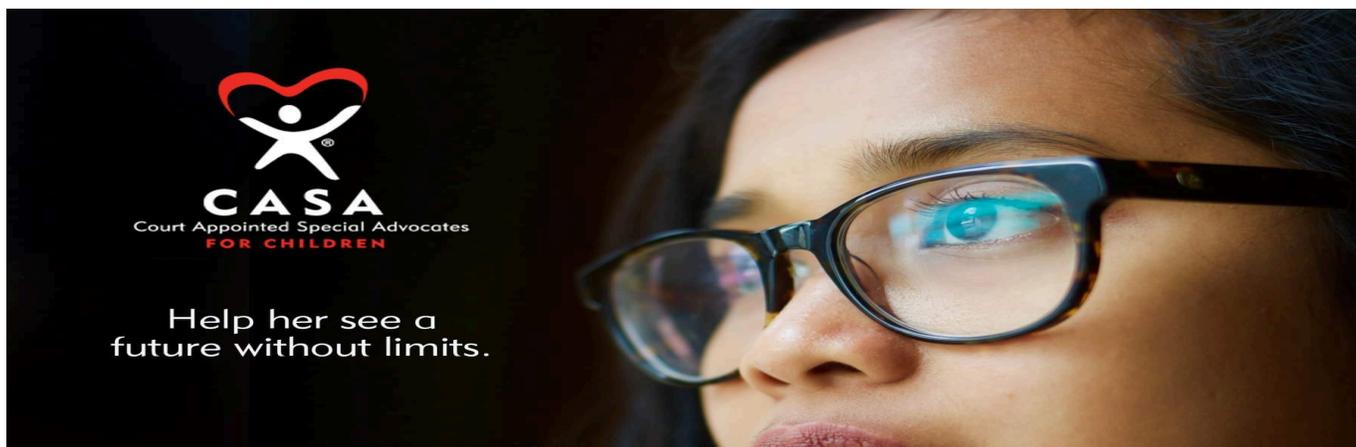


Be a Child's Voice!

Volunteer with CASA Children's Intervention Services, Inc.



CASA VOLUNTEER FACT SHEET

What is CASA CIS?

CASA Children's Intervention Services, Inc. is a nonprofit organization operating under National and Virginia standards whose mission is ensure a world where every abused or neglected child is given the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.. We recruit, train, and supervise ordinary people from the community who join us to help accomplish our goal of serving every abused or neglected child who enters the court process due to that abuse. When we receive a case from the Court and assign a volunteer advocate to a child, that child has the advantage of having a reliable adult to speak for his or her best interests. Our volunteer advocates give children a voice and achance for a better life. Through our advocates we provide advocacy for abused and neglected children in Prince William, Fauquier, Rappahannock, and Warren Counties.

What is a CASA volunteer?

CASA stands for "court appointed special advocate." CASA volunteers are people just like you - caring adults in the community who receive training to advocate for the best interest of a child in need of a voice. The CASA volunteer is appointed by a judge to a child or sibling group and that CASA gets to know the child or siblings and becomes a constant in their lives during the tumultuous months following the finding of abuse or neglect.

Does a CASA need certain qualifications?

There are no special educational or other qualifications necessary to become a CASA - besides liking children! Anyone 21 years or older can be a CASA volunteer once completing

the background screening and training process. People of all ages, all cultures and all background make great CASAs. CASAs do need to be open to working with people whose values, backgrounds, and beliefs may vary from their own.

Why do children need CASA volunteers?

Imagine what it is like for a child as they enter the child welfare system, they are already traumatized, often removed from loved ones, maybe placed with strangers. They are sometimes moved from home to home, isolated from friends, extended family and even siblings. Their lives are in the hands of a judge who does not know them and may never meet them. Who does that child trust? This is where the CASA volunteer steps in. The CASA's sole mission is to ensure that the child's best interests are explained and heard by the judge and others. The CASA stands by that child for the duration of the case, following through court proceedings, changes in foster homes, schools, social workers, and whatever else life throws at them. The judge relies on the CASA to provide in-depth facts about the child's life and specific recommendations so that she can make the best decision about the child's needs.



What does a CASA volunteer do?

A CASA spends time getting to know the child or sibling group, visiting at least once a month, while gathering information from the family, doctors, teachers, caregivers, and others involved in the child's life. CASAs also prepare reports for the judge (with help from their supervisors) sharing facts and observations and making recommendations for the child's care that are in their best interests. A CASA's goal is to ensure that the child or children have a safe and loving permanent home. To prepare a recommendation, the CASA volunteer talks with the child, parents, family members, social workers, school officials, health providers, and others who are knowledgeable about the child's history. The CASA volunteer also reviews all records pertaining to the child—such as school, medical, and social worker reports.

Does the CASA receive training?

CASA volunteers undergo a comprehensive training course provided by CASA CIS. Our 30-hour training program is a hybrid program involving in-person, virtual and independent learning. CASA volunteers learn effective advocacy techniques for children and are educated about specific topics such as child welfare, childhood trauma, and how mental illness, substance abuse and other stressors impact families and children. Twelve hours of additional in-service training is required per year during active service.

What time commitment is required?

After initially being assigned to child or sibling group, the CASA volunteer will need to

invest a little more time meeting with the child, doing research and conducting initial interviews prior to the first court appearance. After the CASA moves past that first stage, volunteers normally spend about 8-10 hours a month meeting with the child and providing advocacy. CASAs are asked to stay on the child's case until the case closes because often the advocate may be the only consistent adult in the child's life providing vital stability and continuity.

Why do we do what we do?

Simply put, children in the child welfare system who have a CASA assigned to them fair better in life. While their cases are pending, they are more likely to receive proper therapeutic services, better health care and more likely to stay in their original schools. They are also more successful in school, twice as likely to graduate from high school and are more likely to proceed to college. And they achieve permanent homes more quickly and are far less likely to re-enter the foster care system after initial reunification. Perhaps most importantly, children know they have an adult they can rely on which they report gives them hope and improves their self-esteem.

What steps are necessary to become a CASA?



Attend a virtual information session.

Complete an application with references.

Have an interview with CASA supervisor.

Successfully complete background check (including fingerprinting).

Attend pre-service training.

For more information call 703.330.8145 or email us at info@casacis.org.