



JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA)

The CASA volunteer's role is one of a reporter to the court and that of impartial observer, conducting the investigation as the judge would if time permitted. The volunteer is not entitled to present a case, call witnesses, examine or cross-examine witnesses. His/her role is to function as investigator and monitor, working directly for the judge. The CASA volunteer submits a written report to the court and may testify if called as a witness. In order to do this, the CASA must investigate the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the court, facilitate the resolution of the problems and monitor progress toward established goals.

Qualifications of a CASA

- Interest in children, their rights, and special needs.
- Time to devote to training sessions, investigation and follow-up on a case (usually an eighteen-month commitment, averaging four hours a week).
- Ability to work with a child, family members, and professionals using tact, concern, and basic human relations skills.
- Ability to communicate verbally and in writing, making verbal and written reports to the court, to the program, and to other persons, as needed.

Requirements of a CASA

- Attend basic training sessions, approximately 35-40 hours in length.
- Maintain strict confidentiality.
- Attend in-service training sessions on an ongoing basis a minimum of 12 hours per year.
- After CASA training, serve at least one child until a permanent plan has been implemented, or for at least one year, or until the judge determines that CASA is no longer needed.
- Keep the program staff informed of all activities and submit your case log on the 1st day of each month you are actively assigned to a case. Confer with your supervisor at least monthly.
- Maintain an up-to-date and complete file on each case assigned.

- Attend regular CASA group meetings to share ideas and concerns with other CASAs.
- Be aware of deadlines and timetables involving an assigned case and turn all reports in on time.
- Complete evaluations which may be requested in order to monitor the entire CASA program.

Special Duties of the CASA

- The CASA's assignment begins when the court signs an order indicating appointment of the assigned CASA. The CASA becomes the CASA of record and so remains until a formal withdrawal is filed.
- After the CASA is assigned to a case, he/she will interview the child, the primary caretaker/parent, and other available family members. He/she will also interview teachers, the social worker, and other agency professionals who are interested parties in the case.
- The CASA will thoroughly review the court's record, the Department of Social Services' records, and read all reports relevant to the case.
- The CASA, if at all feasible, will investigate in person all prospective placements of the child.
- The CASA will meet with a program staff member to review the case in order to assure a valuable recommendation to the court.
- He/she will then prepare a written report that will give the basic descriptive information, state the factual findings and recommendations for the temporary or permanent placement of the child.
 - This final report must be submitted to the program staff twenty days prior to the court date for custody/visitation cases and ten days prior to court for abuse/neglect cases.
 - The report will be reviewed and signed by program staff. The original will be given to the Judge and a copy placed in the court folder.
- The CASA will appear in court and may be required to testify.
- The CASA will monitor the progress made toward the prescribed goals of the court (i.e., recommendations and court orders).
- The CASA will bring any significant issues or problems regarding the child's placement or needs to the attention of the program staff and court. This also means the CASA will be available to reappear in court for reviews and follow-ups until final disposition is made.
- Should the CASA find it necessary to withdraw from a case prior to dismissal of the matter, he/she must contact the program staff. Any active case files must be returned to the program office.