

CASA Volunteer Advocate Job Description (Unpaid)

Overall Responsibility: The overall responsibility of the CASA Volunteer Advocate is to provide the court with carefully researched background of the child to help the court make a sound decision about that child's future. The CASA volunteer role has four (4) main areas of focus: advocate, investigate, facilitate and monitor.

Supervisor: CASA Executive Director

DUTIES

Research

- Conduct an independent research of all relevant facts of the case. Interview all concerned persons, including the child, family members, social workers, teachers, neighbors, foster family, clergy, doctors, etc.
- Document and keep written records regarding each interview. This should include dates of visits, specific descriptions of what you have observed and heard. (This information will be vital when you write your report and recommendation to the judge.)
- Request and examine data from school records, physical and mental health evaluations, legal records, Department of Social Services, parenting classes, etc.
- Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child and whether appropriate services, including "reasonable efforts", are being provided for the child and family.

Monitor the Case

- Visit the child as often as necessary to observe whether the child's essential needs are being met.
- Determine whether the judge's orders are being carried out.
- Attempt to establish a relationship with the child
- Visit with the foster parents, or with whomever the child is placed, regarding their concerns for the child.
- Attend, when feasible, all pre-placement review meetings involving the child in order to keep informed on the child's permanent plan.
- Attend, when possible, all court hearings.
- Report any incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Executive Director and to appropriate authorities, as is required by law concerning mandatory reporters of abuse.

Parameters of Service

- Visits with appointed child should be at least every seven to 10 days
- Visits with child should be at the child's residence; visits may occur offsite once per quarter only with preapproval from CASA Office and child's guardian and in consultation with DHS
- Outreach to all professionals working with the child, including but not limited to DHS, school personnel, and counselors, shall be done in a professional manner

- Gifts may not be purchased for the appointed child by the CASA Volunteer without approval from the CASA Office and child's guardian and in consultation with DHS. Gifts should not become a burden to the CASA Volunteer Advocate, only done so to mark a special circumstance, and not become a regular expectation of the child.

Written Reports and Recommendation

- Ten days prior to any court hearing submit a written report to the CASA Office. This report will be presented to the judge, the caseworker and attorneys involved.
- Follow the "official CASA outline" when you write your report.
- In addition to the information you have gathered, your report should include your personal concerns and your recommendation as to a permanent placement plan.

Requirements

- High School Diploma and/or GED
- 21 years of age
- Participate the initial 30 hour training session
- Participate in twelve hours of in-service each year
- Time to devote approximately eight to ten hours a month to the case
- Maintain strict confidentiality
- Maintain current and complete files on each assigned case
- Keep the CASA Office informed regarding the status of the case and confer with Supervisor as needed
- Stay aware of deadlines and timetables involving an assigned case and turn in all court reports on time
- Keep and complete a monthly record of hours worked and duties performed on each case

Qualifications

- Interest in children, their rights and special needs
- Acceptance of various life styles and cultures
- Conscientious, diligent, thorough, consistent, and reliable
- Ability to maintain perspective/objectivity in an emotionally charged situation
- Ability to work with children, family members, and professionals using tact, concern, and basic human relation skills
- Written and verbal communication skills