

(Place your program logo, address, phone and fax, website information here)

CASA FACT SHEET

What is CASA?

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates: volunteers who are assigned by a Judge to help the Court determine the best interests of children involved in child welfare proceedings.

Volunteers typically work with only one or two families at a time. They devote the time and energy necessary to assist the Family Court and the child welfare system in making the best possible permanent plan for the child. Prior to their assignment, CASA volunteers are extensively screened and trained. These responsible and committed adults are supervised by CASA staff throughout their assignment. They are a strong voice for children in Court, speaking up for the needs of the children.

Once assigned by a Family Court Judge, the CASA volunteer:

- ♥ **Reviews** the Family Court file to gather family history, including court orders.
- ♥ **Interviews** those involved in the case to gather information that will assist the Court in making timely decisions in the child's best interests. If you are the child's parent, foster parent, caseworker, attorney, teacher, medical professional, or someone else involved with the child, you should expect that the CASA volunteer will contact you for an interview.
- ♥ **Communicates** with everyone involved in the case to collaborate on what is best for the child.
- ♥ **Reports** to the Court. After gathering information, the volunteer prepares a report that is reviewed by the program staff and submitted to the court. In order to protect everyone's privacy, these reports are available only to the court and the parties involved in the case.
- ♥ **Facilitates** discussion among the many people involved when a child is involved in Family Court or the child welfare system. CASA can help keep the lines of communication open.
- ♥ **Monitors** progress. The CASA volunteer maintains contact with everyone involved, attends Court appearances, meetings, and follows up on Court orders. In addition, the CASA volunteer visits the child at least monthly. CASA volunteers continually report to the Court for the duration of the assignment.

What are the qualifications of a CASA volunteer?

A CASA volunteer must be at least 21 years of age and successfully complete training and extensive screening prior to case assignment. Training is approximately 30 hours and consists of class work and court observation. Upon completion of training, each volunteer is sworn in by the Court and takes an oath to focus on the best interests of each child to whom they are assigned and to maintain strict confidentiality.

We believe a safe, loving and permanent home is every child's right.

Please feel free to contact the CASA office.