



# WHAT IS A CASA?

*(COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE)*

## FOR PROFESSIONALS

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. CASAs are not paid for their time. They are highly trained volunteers. CASAs are assigned to Dependency and Neglect cases by the court. CASAs can be requested by anyone at any point in the case, but they have to be appointed by the judge. The CASA will gather information and submit objective reports to the court and all parties involved. The information gathered and presented by the CASA will help the judge to make decisions about what is in the best interest of the child(ren) involved. CASAs are trained to be a collaborative member of the professional team. The CASA serves as the “eyes and ears of the court” and will stay involved until the child or children are in a safe, permanent home.

The CASA has four primary roles/goals:

- Gather** information about the child or children,
- Report** to the court by submitting a written report detailing the information gathered, including concerns and recommendations,
- Advocate** for the child or children’s best interest, and
- Monitor** the child or children in the case to ensure they are receiving the serviced and advocacy needed.

The CASA Volunteer	The CASA Volunteer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Does</b> talk to people who may have information about the child or children on their case. These people can include parents, foster parents, relatives, school personnel, therapists, doctors, social workers, attorneys, etc.</li> <li>● <b>Does</b> get to know the child or children and their family.</li> <li>● <b>Does</b> take notes and submit a written, objective report to the court, which may include concerns or recommendations.</li> <li>● <b>Does</b> get copies of all the court documents and educational information on the case, and should be included in the meetings and communications about the case.</li> <li>● <b>Does</b> maintain confidentiality at all times.</li> <li>● <b>Does</b> represent the child or children’s best interest, and is a voice for the child or children in court.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Does not</b> give legal, psychological, or medical advice.</li> <li>● <b>Does not</b> investigate the initial allegations of abuse and/or neglect</li> <li>● <b>Does not</b> make judgments regarding the opinions of professionals on the case.</li> <li>● <b>Does not</b> supervise visitation between the child(ren) and parents.</li> <li>● <b>Does not</b> hold any responsibility for the transportation of family members or the child or children.</li> <li>● <b>Is not</b> associated with the Department of Human Services or the courts - they are independent of both.</li> <li>● <b>May have</b> a <u>different</u> perspective for others in the case - they are not required to agree with anyone.</li> </ul>