

FAQ's

What does the acronym CASA represent?

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate.

How do I become a CASA volunteer?

1. Find a local CASA program
2. Contact the local CASA office
3. Authorize a background check
4. Complete CASA training
5. Be sworn in by the Juvenile Court Judge

Do I need specific work experience or education to become a CASA volunteer?

No. CASA volunteers are everyday citizens from all walks of life who care about children and their welfare. Your common sense, life experience and desire to help is all you need to begin. You will be receiving special training and supervision to ensure you have a complete understanding of your role before you are assigned a case.

How long is my commitment?

Each CASA affiliate program determines the length of commitment required. It typically ranges from one to two years. However, many advocates stay involved much longer because they find making a positive impact in a child's life so rewarding.

How much time will I be expected to contribute each month?

It varies because each case is different, depending on the child's age, situation and needs. On average, a CASA volunteer spends six to ten hours per month on a regular case.

Who do CASA volunteers serve?

CASA volunteers serve children who have been removed from their homes as a result of abuse and/or neglect and need the court's protection. They range from a newborn to age 17, come from all races and ethnicities and have one thing in common — they have been traumatized at the hands of those who were supposed to be their protectors.

How are CASA volunteers appointed to cases?

Once children and youth are taken into DFCS (Department of Family and Children Services) custody, their cases are overseen by judges in the juvenile courts who appoint CASA volunteers to provide recommendations about what is in the best interests of the children — now and for the future.

How many children does a CASA volunteer work with at one time?

The CASA program provides a unique and valuable service built on each CASA volunteer giving individualized attention to one child. However, sometimes a CASA volunteer may work with group of siblings, or be recommended by their supervisor to take on another case.

How is a CASA volunteer different from a social worker?

Social workers are employed by the state and often assigned many cases at a time. The social worker is responsible for helping an entire family, which includes setting up individual services for family members. A CASA volunteer is the advocate for the child, is not paid, works with only a few cases at a time and does not set up services. The CASA volunteer does not replace the social worker on a case; he or she is an independent officer of the court and works within the child welfare system to advocate for what is in the best interest of the children.

How is a CASA volunteer different from an attorney?

A CASA volunteer does not provide legal representation for a child in the courtroom; he or she does not replace an attorney. Both CASA volunteers and attorneys have a duty to investigate firsthand the child's circumstances and make best interests recommendations to the court, but there are significant differences. CASA volunteers are legally prohibited from giving children legal advice – even if they are attorneys. Unlike attorneys, CASA volunteers submit written reports to the court, can give testimony, and work at the discretion of the judge. An attorney has many clients. Because of their one-on-one relationships, CASA volunteers have more time to devote to their children, getting to know them and their circumstances.

Is being a CASA volunteer the same as being a mentor?

CASA volunteers are only appointed to children who have come to the attention of the juvenile court system due to abuse or neglect. Like a mentoring program, the CASA volunteer does develop a relationship with the child through frequent contact; however, the primary role of the CASA volunteer is to gather information about the child, write reports to the court and attend court hearings. The CASA program is not a mentoring program.