



**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

National CASA Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

CHAPTER 1

**Local/Program Pre-Work
Handouts**

CASA/GAL Volunteer Job Description



COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA for Kids, Inc.)

Volunteer Advocate Description

POSITION: Court Appointed Special Advocate Volunteer (CASA)

OFFICE LOCATION: 382 West Chestnut Street Suite 108B Washington, PA 15301
724-228-0414 fax: 724-225-9714 email: casa4kidsinc@gmail.com web site:
www.casawashington.org

TIME COMMITMENT: Complete **approximately 30 hours** of core training and **12 hours** of annual ongoing training. Flexible hours are necessary once a case is assigned, including daytime hours (**average of 12 – 15 hours** each month **for the duration of the case** - minimum of 18 months).

POSITION PURPOSE: To serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer, working independently to investigate and monitor a case of abuse and neglect on behalf of a child or sibling group in the Washington county juvenile court. Most importantly, CASA advocates for children and works with the system to do what is in the children's best interest.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Research by conducting an independent and thorough factual investigation and advocate for your client's best interest **for the duration of the case** (minimum 18 months).
2. Conduct home visits with the child(ren) in the home where they reside (once per month at a minimum) or in any potential homes where they may live in the future. This includes both biological family homes and foster family homes. **Travel can occur anywhere in Washington County. At times, travel may extend beyond Washington County.**
3. Conduct interviews, *on a consistent and ongoing basis*, with Washington County Children and Youth Services (CYS) caseworker, parents/guardians, relatives, friends, attorneys, therapists, teachers, physicians, neighbors, foster parents and/or any persons with relevant information about the child(ren): review files at appropriate agencies relative to the child(ren)'s case: observe child-family dynamics.
4. Collaborate with your CASA supervisor **at least twice monthly** to report on case progress and to discuss your ability to meet agreed upon timelines.

5. Maintain accurate and timely forms and case records, including contact logs, status reports and court reports.
6. Submit court reports no later than **one (1) week** prior to court and status reports **20 days** prior to the hearing date.
7. Attend **all court hearings and critical meetings** regarding your case.
8. Maintain mandated standard of confidentiality.

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Must be at least **21 years of age**.
2. Must possess **computer skills, strong oral and written communications skills**.
3. Willing to commit to serving on a minimum of one (1) assigned case for **the duration of the case life** (minimum of 18 months).
4. Willing to accept supervision, training and evaluation from the professional staff.
5. Must be **able to provide own transportation and be willing to travel** is necessary.
6. Must possess **strong interpersonal skills** and be **capable of respecting and relating to individuals from various backgrounds and cultures in a *caring and sensitive* manner**.
7. Must successfully complete the volunteer application and pass screening and police background checks.
8. Complete core training program lasting **approximately 30 hours**.
9. Must be willing and able to attend a minimum of **twelve (12) on-going training hours per year**.

BENEFITS TO THE VOLUNTEER:

1. **Impact the life of a child** who is involved with the Juvenile Court as a result of abuse, neglect or abandonment.
2. **Gain extensive knowledge** about child abuse and neglect and the legal and social service systems in Washington County.
3. **Increase your awareness** of educational opportunities in the child advocacy and juvenile justice arena.
4. **Serve your community** and assist in the continued growth and vitality of our region.

CASA for Kids is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

“Alphabet Soup”: Commonly Used Acronyms

ACRONYM	MEANING
302'd	Involuntary mental health commitment
504 Plan	Legal Educational Plan to assist students with special needs who are in the regular education setting. This is not an IEP and if you have an IEP, it supersedes the 504 Plan
AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
A/N	Abuse/Neglect
AAPLA	Approved Alternative Placement Living Arrangement
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AGH	Allegheny General Hospital
AIS	Academic Intervention Services
AP	Advanced Placement
APPLA	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (sometimes simply PPLA)
AS	Autistic Support
AS	Asperger's Syndrome
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act
AT	Assistive Technology
AWOL	Absent without permission
BF	Biological Father
BHRS	Behavioral Health Rehabilitative Services
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
BM	Biological Mother
BSC	Behavioral Specialist Consultant
BSU	Base Service Unit
C	Child
CAC	Child Advocacy Center
CAC	Certified Addictions Counselor
CAP	Child Abuse Program
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention Act of 1974 (updated 1996)
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CASSP	Child and Adolescent Service System Program
CASW	Community Action Southwest (now known as Blue Prints)
CBA	Curriculum Based Assessment
CHN	Children
CHINS	Children in Need of Assistance
CHP	Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
CI	Children's Institute
CINA	Child in Need of Services and/or Supervision
CIP	Court Improvement Project

CIT	Court Improvement Team
CLA	Community Living Arrangement
CP	Concurrent Planning
CPP	Child Permanency Plan
CPS	Child protective Services
CRR	Community Residential Rehabilitation (aka Therapeutic Foster Care)
CSU	Court Services Unit
CTS	Center for Traumatic Stress
CW	Caseworker
CWS	Caseworker Supervisor
CYF	Children, Youth, and Families in Pittsburgh
CYS	Children and Youth Services
D & A	Drug and Alcohol
DCJS	Department of Criminal Justice Services
DCSE	Division of Child Support Enforcement
DPW	Department of Public Welfare
DV	Domestic Violence
ED	Emotional Disturbance
EI	Early Intervention
EIS	Early Intervention Services
ESS	Emotional Support Schooling
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESY	Extended School Year
F	Father
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
FC	Foster Care
FCCW	Foster Care Case Worker
FDTC	Family Drug Treatment Court (may be called DTC: Drug Treatment Court)
FERPA	Family Education Rights & Privacy Act
FF	Foster Father
FGDM	Family Group Decision Making
FM	Foster Mother
FR	Family Resources
FSP	Family Service Plan
FTE	Full Time Equivalency
FTT	Failure To Thrive
GAL	Guardian ad Litem (In some states this is an attorney, in others the volunteer advocate)
GPS	General Protective Services (when a case is active with CYS but not the Court)
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act
Hx	History
ICM	Intensive Case manager

ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement for Children
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978
ID	Intellectual Disability
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDSI	Involuntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse
IEE	Independent Educational Environment
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IL	Independent Living
JCP	Juvenile Court Project
JPO	Juvenile Probation Officer
JWYC	Justice Works Youth Care
LD	Learning Disabled
LEA	Local Education Agency
LEAP	Learning Experience & Alternative Program
LEO	Law Enforcement Officer
LIHEAP	Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
LS	Learning Support
LSS	Life Skills Support
LSW	Licensed Social Worker
LTF	Local Task Force
LTFC	Long term Foster Care
M	Mother
MA	Maternal Aunt
MA	Medical Assistance
MGF	Maternal Grand Father
MGM	Maternal grand Mother
MH/MR	Mental health/Mental Retardation (now called MR/ID – Mental Health/Intellectually Disabled)
MR/ID	Mental Health/Intellectually Disabled
MSGF	Maternal Step Grand Father
MSGM	Maternal Step Grand Mother
MSW	Masters of Social Work
MT	Mobile Therapist
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NF	Natural Father
NM	Natural Mother
NOREP	Notice of Recommended Educational Placement
NOS	Not Otherwise Specified
OCD	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OT	Occupational Therapist

OVR	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
PACA	Post Adoption Contact Agreement
PBSP	Positive Behavioral Support Plan
PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
PDE	Pennsylvania Department of Education
PFA	Protection From Abuse
PGF	Paternal Grand Father
PGM	Paternal Grand Mother
PLC	Permanent legal Custody
PO	Probation Officer
POS	Positive
PPM	Permanency Planning Meeting
PR	Pressley Ridge
PRT	Permanency Round Table
PSGF	Paternal Step Grand Father
PSGM	Paternal Step Grand Mother
PT	Physical Therapy
PTE	Permission to Evaluate
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAD	Reactive Attachment Disorder
R/O	Rule Out
RR	Re-evaluation Report
PTF	Residential Treatment Facility
SC	Supports Coordinator
SIL	Semi Independent Living
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SPLC	Subsidized Permeant Legal Custodianship
SSDI	Social Security Disability Income
SSI	Social Security Income
SWAN	Statewide Adoption Network
TAH	Try Again Homes (now known as Blue Prints)
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TES	Therapeutic Emotional Support
TFC	Therapeutic Foster Care
TPR	Termination of Parental Rights
TSS	Therapeutic Support Staff
Tx	Treatment
VOCA	Victims of Crime Act
VOCAA	Victims of Child Abuse Act
WPIC	Western Pennsylvania Institute and Clinic
WWS	Washington Women’s Shelter