

Expectations for Advocates

Volunteer child advocates are vital to the success of CASA. Without the work of our volunteers, nothing could get done. The advocates are responsible for everything from talking with the child to writing court reports. They work with DCP&P and they also make sure that DCP&P is doing what it needs to do. They are the voice of the child and the ears of the courts. They are the only consistency in a foster child's life. It is a lot of work to save a child's life, but CASA volunteers are up to the task.

Responsibilities to the Child

- Conduct follow-up investigations to ensure that court orders are being properly executed.
 - Review court orders.
 - Visit child regularly and maintain sufficient contact with parents, relatives, resource parents, and agency personnel to determine if court orders are being properly executed.
 - Verify accuracy of information gained during follow-up investigation.
 - Notify CASA staff and the attorney for the child if the orders of the court are not being properly executed.
 - Contact those who are responsible for carrying out court orders to address noncompliance.
 - Prepare for each hearing by writing reports on case plan progress and compliance with court orders.
- Report to the court when the needs of the child are not being met.
 - Identify facts and changes in situation that may necessitate the case's return to court.
- Protect and promote the best interest of the child until formally relieved of the responsibility by the court.
 - Regularly monitor the child in his/her home setting to evaluate appropriateness of placement, determine whether the child is receiving court-ordered services, and identify any unmet needs.
 - Determine if additional services are needed for the child.
 - Identify facts and changes in the situation that may necessitate the case's return to court.

Additional Expectations

- **Training**
 - 30 hours of orientation training for all new advocates.
 - Additional mandatory in-services training on special topics for 12 hours every year for all advocates.
- **Court attendance**
 - CASA advocates are expected to attend court on behalf of the child or children on their caseloads.

- In addition to court reports, these court appearances allow for advocates to speak up for the child.
- **Advocate for CASA**
 - CASA appreciates the hard work of all of its volunteers. Advocates are vitally important to the children who have them, but many more are without a CASA advocate. Our advocates can only be their for so many children, so CASA is always in need of more dedicated advocates to be their for the children.
 - CASA expects all of their advocates to help spread the word about CASA to individuals in their communities. Help recruit new volunteers, donors, board members, and spokespeople to increase the good work that CASA does and to give a voice to every child in Camden County.

Documentation

- **Court Reports**
 - Court reports are vital for advocates to complete.
 - Court reports tell the judge everything that the advocates have learned from their investigation.
 - Reports influence court orders.
 - Judges take CASA recommendations very seriously.
 - The child's wishes and best interest is in every report, submitting court reports gives these children a rare opportunity to have their voice heard.
 - Reports must be submitted to CASA staff and Peer Coordinators 2 weeks prior to every court date or the judge will not see it.
- **Volunteer Logs**
 - Documents what the volunteers have done in the past month.
 - A detailed record of all contacts made, miles logged, and visitations had with the child.
 - Allows CASA to know that volunteers are on task.
 - Keeps CASA informed about the case.
 - An opportunity to get assistance and advice from supervisors.
 - Must be completed at the end of every month.

Teamwork

- CASA volunteers are expected to remember that they are part of a community. The role of an advocate can be a lonely one if you try and do it alone.
- Staff members are always available to advocates if they have questions, concerns, problems, or just need someone to talk to about their case.
- Peer coordinators are also available to assist their advocates in any way possible. They are there to make an advocate's job easier.
- There are always events going on at CASA, advocates are always encouraged to attend, help with planning and preparation, offer their own ideas for future events, and just get to be part of a larger community.