

CASA QUICK REFERENCE

1. Visit your CASA child(ren) regularly. Once a week is standard. Visiting them in various settings can be beneficial. If this is a problem please consult your supervisor immediately.
2. Talk to as many people involved with the child(ren) as necessary; parents, foster parents, teachers, social worker, therapist, childcare provider, relatives, and most importantly, the child(ren) to gather information. If you have difficulty contacting another party please consult your supervisor. Advise parties that have not received a copy of your order that you are a CASA and may be coming to visit at some point during the duration of the case.
3. Do not intermix your CASA child(ren) with your family. In other words, do not take your spouse, own children or best friend (this includes man's best friend) along on visits or include your CASA child(ren) in your family gatherings. It is also important to remember that once the case is closed and you are removed from the case, it will be up to the parent or guardian to decide if you will continue to see the child as a friend of the family. Your role as a CASA Volunteer ends when the release is signed by the judge; therefore it is very important not to establish a "family" type relationship with the child.
4. NEVER, NEVER take your CASA child(ren) to your home or on overnight visits such as camping trips or out of town overnight trips.
5. Try to choose activities that will allow the child(ren) to communicate with you. Building a rapport with the child(ren) may take time, be patient.
6. Do not provide services such as transportation or any other services that are the responsibility of other agencies. Please remember that CASA's do not supervise visits, baby sit for parents or providers, transport children to and from appointments, register for school, activities and so on.
7. Paint a picture for the judge in your report by describing the child(ren)'s appearance, personality and demeanor. Saying the child is doing "fine" is not painting a picture.
8. Always make an effort to schedule an appointment when you want to speak with your supervisor even for a small segment of time and please contact your supervisor 10 – 14 days prior to a hearing to make arrangements to write the report.
9. Try not to get in a rut when visiting your CASA child(ren). It's okay to take them out for lunch once in a while but don't feel you have to spend money on the child every week. In the event that you want to give a small gift for a special occasion please make it reasonable and appropriate, and discuss in advance with the foster parent, parent or guardian.
10. When transporting children; use of car seats (back seat) is required for children that fall into the age and weight restrictions. Do not transport children not included on your court order. The CASA office must have a copy of your proof of insurance and driver's license on file before transporting children. (It is your responsibility to keep this information current at the CASA office.)
11. **DO NOT** take your cell phone or beeper into the courtroom, if you do, make sure they are turned off.
12. Dress appropriately for the courtroom; you are representing the entire CASA Program.
13. Maintain the highest level of confidentiality regarding your case and keep all files, notes and reports in a safe, confidential place (locked if possible). All file contents must be returned to the CASA Program upon release from the case.
14. Keep relationships with the children appropriate. Offering a "high five" or a handshake instead of a hug or a kiss will insure that your role is clear. Children may be frightened by "touchy feely" people, especially if they have been sexually or physically abused.
15. Attend in-services provided by the CASA staff. National CASA standards require 12 hours of training per year.
16. **DO NOT** make promises to your CASA child(ren) that you have no control over, and always follow through with plans you have made with them.
17. Try to avoid asking the child(ren) where they want to live. This is too much weight for a child to carry on their shoulders. If they mention it to you simply make note.
18. Refrain from giving advice to others involved with the case (legal, financial, marital, whatever). Remember CASA's gather information, not give information. People will want information from you regarding the case because you are available and listen; but please refer them to the appropriate agency (case manager, attorney or other professionals). **(over)**

ALWAYS CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

The CASA/GAL Volunteer's Relationship with the Child

Establishing a relationship with the child is one of the most important things you do as a CASA/GAL volunteer. The ideal relationship is one that maximizes your ability to advocate successfully for the child. The following guidelines describe the parameters for your relationship and contacts with the child:

As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you have direct and sufficient contact with a child to carry out an independent and valid investigation of the child's circumstances, including the child's needs and wishes, so as to be able to make sound, thorough, and objective recommendations in the child's best interest. This contact should occur in person to provide you with firsthand knowledge of the child and his/her unique personality, abilities, and needs. While social contact is permitted with the child to develop trust and a meaningful relationship, you function as an objective advocate for the child and not as the child's attorney, caseworker, counselor, mentor, or parental figure. You do not provide direct services to the child, such as supervising visitation; however, it is appropriate for you to observe visitation. Under no circumstances shall you take the child into your home, provide shelter for the child, or take the child on an overnight outing.

National CASA Volunteer Manual