

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Peoria County **Job Description**

Purpose

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) serves by judicial orders as an Office of the Peoria County Juvenile Court. The CASA serves on a volunteer basis as an independent advocate for the child's best interest and monitors the case until permanency is achieved. The CASA is directly responsible to the CASA Supervisor and must adhere to the rules and guidelines of the Juvenile Court Act.

Qualifications

- Age 21 or older
- Satisfactory CASA application and pre-service interview
- Submit to and pass background checks, which will include
 - CANTS (Child Abuse and Neglects Tracking System)
 - LEADS (Law Enforcement Detailed Summary)
 - Fingerprints (submitted to the FBI)
 - Child Abuse Registry Network
 - A valid Driver's License or government issued identification
 - Verification of social security number
- Successful complete of CASA training
- Participants cannot be current foster parents
- Commit to approximately 5-15 hours per month to CASA duties
- Commit to 10 hours of in-service (continuing education) per year
- Possess good oral and written communication skills
- Access to a computer and knowledge of word-processing programs

Duties and Responsibilities

- Conduct independent and objective investigation of case
 - Read (and review as appropriate) all relevant records
 - Court file
 - Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) file
 - Private agency file
 - Interview all principals in the case
 - Child(ren)
 - Biological parents
 - Foster parents or residential facility personal
 - DCFS case worker
 - Guardian at Litem
 - Others having pertinent information (teachers, counselors, physicians, extended family members, etc. as permitted)
- Maintain all case information in strict confidence
 - Give case-related information only to parties approved by CASA advocate supervisor

- Return all case-related materials to CASA office upon withdrawal or case completion
- Monitor and facilitate progress of case through system
 - Help insure children are adequately cared for and special needs are addressed
 - Maintain contact with children and foster parents or residential facility personnel, including at least monthly face-to-face contact with children
 - Consult with service providers (therapists, school personnel, etc.)
 - Report case status to Advocate Supervisor
 - Review client Service Plan
 - Objectively report status to appropriate (CASA Supervisor, Private agency, DCFS, ASA, GAL, etc.)
 - Monitor biological parent's progress in following service plan
 - Maintain independent and objective personal contact with parents
 - Consult with service providers to verify service plan progress
 - Follow DCFS/private agencies efforts to achieve permanence
 - Maintain independent and objective personal contact with DCFS/Private Agency worker
 - Attend Administrative Case Review (ACR) meetings
 - Monitor implementation of ACR objectives
 - Report status to appropriate parties (Advocate Supervisor, private agency, DCFS, ASA, GAL, etc.)
 - Consult with Guardian ad Litem (GAL) regarding case
 - Clarify any legal questions regarding the case
 - Consult with other appropriate persons as needed.
- Insure all relevant information is available to the Court
 - Prepare Court report prior to hearing
 - Update case status with factual documentation
 - Submit report to advocate supervisor at least 21 days prior to the court date
 - Support the child's best interest in Court
 - Attend all court hearings
 - Have accurate, up-to-date case file
 - Meet prior to hearing to discuss case with parties
 - Be prepared to testify if called upon
- Keep advocate supervisor informed of case activity and progress
 - Maintain regular contact with advocate supervisor monthly
 - Discuss case advocacy issues and concerns via telephone as issues arise
 - Keep accurate track of all time spent on the case and turn in hours to advocate supervisor by 5th of each month.
 - Keep advocate supervisor informed of illness or vacations that would temporarily prevent activity
 - Notify advocate supervisor of any changes of address, phone numbers or employment status.

- Pursue professional development in the areas of child welfare, family issues and related areas by completing 10 hours per year of in-service training.
- Participants cannot be current foster parents
- Commit to approximately 5-15 hours per month to CASA duties
- Commit to 10 hours of in-service (continuing education) per year
- Possess good oral and written communication skills
- Access to a computer and knowledge of word-processing programs

What CASAs DO NOT do

- A CASA should not provide direct service delivery to any parties that could
 - Lead to a conflict of interest or liability problems
 - Cause a child or family to become dependent on the CASA advocate for services that should be provided by other agencies or organizations.
 - Examples of inappropriate advocate practices are:
 - Sheltering a child in the home
 - Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling
 - Making placement arrangements for the child
 - Giving money or gifts to the child or family
- A CASA should not transport a child in the course of his/her duties as a CASA volunteer
- A CASA should not be related to any parties involved in the case, or be employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest.