



CASA Volunteer Manual



Be the Voice.

CHANGE A
CHILD'S STORY.™



CASA of Southwest Michigan, Inc.

Serving Berrien and St. Joseph County, Michigan

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Dear CASA Volunteer,

Welcome to the CASA Program!

Through CASA, you have joined a national network of over 900 member programs comprised of over 95,000 volunteers who advocate annually on behalf of over 250,000 foster children in the United States. Our staff is eager to support and work with you. We know you will find your work as a CASA volunteer meaningful and fulfilling-- but this is difficult work. You will have the opportunity to directly impact a child whose life has been affected by abuse and neglect. Your involvement with a child will have a positive impact on their life and it may also change yours. We hope you will gain a greater appreciation for the basic needs and rights of innocent children who all deserve a safe, permanent, and loving home.

Thank you for your support of our community's children and families. Together, we can make a tremendous difference in these precious lives.

Kate Rendell
Executive Director
CASA of Southwest Michigan



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CASA CONTACT INFORMATION

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National CASA Association

529 14th Street NW

Suite 420

Washington, DC 20045

Website: www.casaforchildren.org

Report Child Abuse: **Children's Protective Services (855) 444-3911**



The mission of CASA of Southwest Michigan, Inc. is to provide specially selected and highly trained community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of each abused and neglected child in pursuit of a safe and permanent home.

Our Vision:

Helping a child in foster care create a life of promise, possibilities, and permanency.

Our Values:

Collaboration. Honesty. Transparency. Kindness. Equity.

THE STARFISH STORY



A young girl was walking along the beach which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement.

She had been doing this for some time when an old man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all of these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"

The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the old man and replied,

"Well, I made a difference to that one!"

The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined her in throwing starfish back into the sea.

Soon other joined, and all the starfish were saved.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following policies are important to our work and maintaining National CASA standards of operation. Some of this information is expanded upon the “policy” section of this guide. Staff is always available to assist you in any way.

COMMUNICATION WITH PROGRAM STAFF is important. Call not only when you have questions, but also to update our files and assure us all is going well. Minimum program standards require monthly documentation in our office files that indicate your involvement.

CONFIDENTIALITY of information you obtain as an advocate is imperative. Volunteers must agree and sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon application to the program governing all information obtained while performing duties in the program. In addition, upon acceptance of each case you reaffirm that you understand our confidentiality policy and will abide by it. In general, the policy indicates that Volunteers must respect children’s and families’ rights to privacy in regard to personal information obtained from any source; all volunteers must adhere to confidentiality restrictions imposed by law or regulations; disclosure or verification of confidential case information shall not be made to anyone not authorized by the court to receive information; case records/notes must be secured and inaccessible to public view. In addition, do not discuss cases in public locations such as the courthouse hallways. Do not discuss cases with media; refer media inquiries to the CASA Executive Director. Contact staff when you need to discuss your case or vent your feelings. You may not provide written information you receive from other persons or agencies to parties other than DHHS or workers without court approval. Confer with the CASA Executive Director for guidelines as to what can be shared and when it is appropriate to do so. (see confidentiality policy in this guide)

COURT ATTENDANCE by you is always the best representation for the children. If a situation occurs that you will be unable to attend court, please contact the CASA Executive Director as soon as possible.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING enables you to stay current with changes in the court system and the delivery of social services. All CASA Volunteers are required to complete 12 hours of in-service training per year. In addition, any related training sessions, or seminars which you attend may be credited to you. Just send a letter providing information about your participation in other training sessions to the CASA staff with whom you are working or include it on your monthly report.

MILEAGE costs may be reimbursed by the CASA program as funds permit. Please submit monthly mileage reports so we can use the information for grant reporting. (See Monthly Activity Log in the attachments section of this manual)

OFFICE FILE UPDATES are important. Whenever you receive pertinent information on your case from anyone other than our office, please provide a copy to us (with the case name, case number, date and your name as sender clearly marked on it) or bring it in on your next visit to

the court. Please inform staff immediately when a significant case development occurs: when children are moved, DHHS caseworker change, parents move, etc.

OTHER ADVOCATE NEEDS - If at any time after completing a case you decide that you would like to do more than case work or feel a need to avoid case work for a time, let us know. There may be other interesting, challenging, and rewarding tasks which volunteers can do. If you are interested in these activities, call the CASA Program Manager.

REPORTS must be written, unless the judge has made a special request. Written reports must be submitted to our office fifteen (15) working days prior to the hearing to allow for editing and filing with the court. Written Reports should follow the format provided to you in training and this report is provided for you at the end of this manual. Volunteers must also complete the Monthly Tracking Form, an example is located in the attachments section of this manual and we will provide you with an electronic version.

TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN, PARENTS OR GUARDIAN – CASA Volunteers are prohibited from transporting children, parents, foster parents, or guardians **for any reason at any time**. If a CASA should transport a child(ren), parents or guardians assigned to their case it may be cause for their termination from the CASA program.

VISITS AND/OR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN- Please schedule visits with your child(ren) every 7-10 days with at least three physical contacts per month. It enables you to ascertain that the child(ren) are being well cared for and provided emotional support. Your CASA supervisor should be consulted regarding visitations under extenuating circumstances. Taking concise notes is essential, for your notes will be the basis of your monthly report and court report. Submission of the monthly volunteer reports is essential. Monthly visits are required if the child is within a reasonable distance to the CASA but residing out of the county. Zoom visits are allowed if the child is placed at an unreasonable distance from the county or there is a health/safety reason to avoid in-person visit. If the volunteer is unable to attend visits at least monthly due to specific situations involving the condition, location, or circumstance relative to the child please discuss with your program manager or volunteer supervisor.

CASE LOAD- In general, a CASA Volunteer will be assigned to one case with and maximum of 4 children. CASA Standards allow a CASA Volunteer to be assigned to two cases at once.

CASE ENDING: CASA involvement will conclude when the child has reached permanency and the Court terminates jurisdiction. In some circumstances, CASA will be dismissed prior to termination of jurisdiction by request of CASA or dismissal by Court Order. When a case ends, volunteers are required to return their case notes to the CASA program.

CASA VOLUNTEER ROLE JOB DESCRIPTION

CASA Volunteer Job Description:

- ❖ Be an independent advocate for the child's best interest. Maintain objectivity, act in a responsible, professional manner. Adhere to program and court policies;
- ❖ Commit to follow at least one case assigned to you until that child is in a stable, permanent home (or CASA is discharged) and twelve (12) hours of in-service training per year. Monitor the case until it is closed by the court;
- ❖ Have face to face contact with the child(ren) every 7-10 days and some form of contact weekly if face to face contact is not feasible or monthly contact if the child is out of the county, in residential placement or in a stable, pre-adoptive home;
- ❖ Be knowledgeable of the roles and responsibilities of CASA and have the mental and physical skills necessary to perform them;
- ❖ Communicate with program staff regarding all court hearings and attend court hearings, testifying if requested. Gather all relevant documentation. Complete all required court reports and maintain office files with current documentation;
- ❖ Collaborate and coordinate with all child welfare stakeholders;
- ❖ Respect the privacy of the child and the family and hold confidential all information obtained in the course of service as a CASA, as required by law and program standards;
- ❖ Report any information disclosed that may result in harm to the child to the DHHS and CASA Program Manager or CASA Volunteer Coordinators as soon as possible;
- ❖ Not practice, condone, facilitate, or participate in any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, relationship status, political belief, handicap or any other preference or personal characteristic or status;
- ❖ No transportation will be provided to the child(ren), parents, or guardians involved on assigned case;
- ❖ Participate in a required program evaluation of your performance;
- ❖ Request that the program terminate service to the child when it is no longer required or no longer serves the child's needs or interests;

CASA PROGRAM NO NO'S

This is a short list of restrictions while participating as a CASA Volunteer. These restrictions are more fully addressed throughout this manual.

No children at home. Do not take children home with you or have them with you overnight.

No role confusion. Do not attempt to be a substitute parent, therapist, caseworker or “big brother/big sister.” Your role is as an Advocate. Do not give legal advice or therapeutic counseling to anyone.

No transportation of children, parents, or guardians. Volunteers are not insured by the CASA Program to transport children, parents, or guardians.

No conflict of interest. A CASA cannot be related to any party involved on a case, or be employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest. (See our Conflict of Interest Policy in the “Policies” section of this manual.)

No *ex parte* contact with judges. Never communicate with a judge or referee about a case unless you are in court where all dialogue is recorded and all parties are present.

No media contact. Do not initiate or respond to media contact about any case unless given the expressed consent of CASA of Southwest Michigan.

No misuse of credentials. Use your court orders and CASA ID only for accessing information on your cases.

No promises. Never make promises to clients regarding outcomes of hearings, placements of children, or other issues defined by court order or agency role description.

No violation of confidentiality. Do not discuss case specifics and family identity with anyone except CASA staff or parties to the case. Seek case advice from CASA supervisor.

No Child Placement Arrangements. Volunteers are not to make any type of child placement arrangements.

No “Friending” your CASA child, foster parents, etc. Please review our social media policy listed in the policy section of this guide. You may text your children but it is not the preferred mode of communication. All communication (written or verbal) via any source must be appropriate, professional and age-appropriate at all times.

And, always provide CASA staff immediate notice of any accident, injury, child abuse allegation disclosure of abuse, report of abuse or other incident involving the child or volunteer.

ADVOCATE SUPERVISION

CASA Staff will make every effort to provide supervision and guidance for the good work you do! Every question is important; we are here to support your efforts. In addition, please provide input to CASA staff; tell us how best to support you!

The CASA Executive Director and staff (if any) supervise CASA Volunteers.

The CASA program staff shall be easily accessible and make every effort to provide quick and thorough guidance to the CASA Volunteers.

The CASA Executive Director or staff (if any) will hold case conferences with the volunteer to review the progress of their cases. Initially case conferences will occur at least biweekly and once the case is stable, conferences will occur monthly. Case conferences may occur less frequently if there is little activity in a case. Case conferences can be in person, by email or by telephone. Regular email/telephone updates may eliminate the need for in person case conferences.

The CASA Executive Director will conduct or arrange in-service training of at least twelve (12) hours per year.

The CASA Executive Director will review the volunteers written court reports before they are submitted to the court. If there are concerns with the volunteer's report or recommendations, a conference will be convened to discuss and address the issue(s).

The CASA program will evaluate all volunteers on an annual basis using standardized evaluation forms to review volunteer performance and effectiveness. Evaluations will include:

1. Assessment of the CASA's involvement in the case
2. Participation in ongoing training and monthly meetings
3. Comments from the Judge, court staff, and other parties
4. Written reports
5. Performance of volunteer responsibilities

DISCHARGE OF A VOLUNTEER

The CASA Volunteer is a part of the Court's volunteer staff and therefore can be requested to resign or be discharged by the Executive Director. A CASA Volunteer may be discharged or terminated from a specific case or from the program.

Conduct Leading to Immediate Dismissal includes but not limited to:

- Taking action without program or court approval, which could endanger the child, or is outside the role and/or powers of the CASA volunteer or program.
- Breach of confidentiality
- Violating program policies or procedures, court rule, or law.
- Falsifying volunteer application or misrepresenting facts during the screening process.
- Taking a child home.
- Acting as the program representative to the public/media, i.e., providing public testimony or making statements to the media without direct permission from the CASA Executive Director or the CASA SWMI Board of Directors. Improperly using any authority as a CASA Volunteer.
- Failing to notify CASA staff and DHHS of any accident, injury, child abuse report or any other incident involving the CASA and/or the child within 48 hours of the incident.
- Existence of child abuse/neglect allegations against the volunteer.

Conduct That May Lead to Dismissal including but not limited to:

- Failing to follow established program guidelines including:
 - Inability and/or unwillingness to effectively carry out CASA duties.
 - Failing to complete required CASA in-service training.
 - Failing to maintain case logs/notes and submit reports as defined by policy and procedure.
 - Unwillingness to adhere to court and program policies and procedures.
- Transportation of a child(ren), parents or guardians assigned to your case.
- Failing to follow any policies set forth by supervisor/program not specifically set forth above

CASA PRACTICE GUIDELINES

FOR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Visits and/or contact with children should occur weekly while assigned to a case if that child is within the county, monthly for children outside the county. It is important to see the child in multiple settings.

- Don't take children home with you or have a child with you overnight.
- Ask if the children have questions and answer the questions honestly with facts.
 - Do not probe or introduce the specifics of abuse. Be especially careful when discussing issues in sexual abuse and other potential criminal cases.
 - Explain your role as a CASA in words children can understand. Communicate in a manner appropriate for their age and developmental level.
 - If necessary, explain to children why they were removed from their home and keep them informed about case events. Please consult with the child's therapist to determine the most appropriate language to use in expressing sensitive issues
 - Explain confidentiality. Tell children that you may be asked to tell what they tell you. If they are adolescents, tell them exactly what information you will share.
- Visit the child prior to any hearing that the child will be attending. Explain what is expected to occur and explore the child's current reactions and feelings regarding the upcoming hearing if you have the opportunity to do so.
- Reflect children's feelings without evaluating them and let them know it is okay to have unpleasant or negative feelings. Be an active listener (ask questions).
- Respect children's attachments to their parents. Remain neutral and non-judgmental about their parents. Do not express your opinion of the parents even if asked.
- Treat children with respect. Don't talk down to them or criticize them.
- Don't make promises you cannot keep. Keep the promises you make.
- Tell children that what happened is not their fault. With older children who have been in therapeutic treatment and/or state care, confirm the need to accept past problems and assume responsibility for their future.
- Prior to confirming with children what you will advocate for, confer with the treatment team (therapist, foster parents, social workers, case managers) regarding concerns children expressed to you and other case matters.
- Know that your case will have a beginning, middle and an end. Plan on being in the child's life, as a CASA Volunteer for only a limited time.

FOR CONTACT WITH PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

- Obtain permission from the parent's attorney before beginning a conversation with them. CASA Staff will instruct you more fully on this issue
- Explain your role as a court appointed special advocate in words parents and relatives can understand. Do your best to develop good working relationships with both parents and relatives.
- Focus on obtaining information. Find the strengths of the parents and family members. Find the needs of the family. Look at families through a 'resource lens.' Strive to be non-judgmental.
- Tell the parents and relatives that you have been appointed by the court. Explain confidentiality: you will gather information about the case, then report facts and make recommendations to the court.
- Listen with respect. Listen more than you speak.
- Respond to questions. When you do not know an answer, say you do not. If the question is about their legal action, encourage them to contact their attorney. If the question is about services, encourage them to proactively contact the caseworker. Confer with your CASA supervisor to assist you if you are uncertain about the answer to a question.
- Let the parents and family members know you are aware of the stress caused by court intervention.
- Avoid asking leading questions and making emotional remarks.
- Use reinforcement such as "I see, uh huh" or a nod of your head to encourage responsiveness.
- Begin with general, open-ended questions such as "Tell me about. . . ". Use closed questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no" or a short answer when you need specific information or when you are not receiving responses to more general questions.
- Strive to understand your attitudes and behaviors, then try to understand the attitudes and behaviors of the parents, family members and foster parents.
- Be clear about what is to occur next. Consult your CASA supervisor for help in planning your work as a CASA or assistance with any questions you may have.
- After contact with parents or family members, carefully document the facts you obtained, and your observations, actions, questions, and plans. Use objective statements that describe a specific fact or behavior. Do not make interpretations, diagnostic conclusions, or judgments.
- File your notes, updates, or any records you obtain in your file provide a copy to your CASA Supervisor for their records

FOR CONTACT WITH PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

- When first contacting an agency, introduce yourself as the Court Appointed Special Advocate. If the person/agency is unfamiliar with the CASA program, explain the role of the CASA (the CASA office has information to distribute). If seeking information, provide a copy of the Order of Appointment. Generally, CASA staff will provide the court order to caseworkers once you are appointed.
- Receive all records in person or have them sent to the CASA office. To access records on anyone other than the child, contact your CASA supervisor about obtaining a release of information form from the Court.
- Document all contacts and conversations in your case notes by entering the date, type of contact, agency, and individual names. Enter factual highlights of conversations and observations.
- Maintain confidentiality. With contacts other than DHHS/POS, limit information provided to that necessary to state your request for information.
- Consider the needs and schedule of the other party. Be brief. State the reason you are contacting them. Provide details only if necessary. Present most important information first.
- Arrange visits in advance.
- Watch for opportunities to express appreciation and praise and do so. Specify what was done or said, how it contributed, and why you appreciate it.
- Practice good listening skills. Affirm that you have heard what was said. Summarize or paraphrase significant statements then ask if you understood correctly. If strong emotions are expressed, affirm your awareness of the feelings of the speaker. Confer with program staff if problem is unresolved. Avoid escalating conflicts.
- Be certain information you share with and receive from service providers is known by the assigned caseworker or supervisor. Provide any significant new information as soon as possible. Confer with team prior to court appearances.
- Contact service provider(s) to find out about the availability of needed services. If referral seems appropriate, contact caseworker and request that a referral is made.
- Contact the assigned caseworker and your CASA supervisor when concerns exist about a child's placement.
- When appropriate, confer regarding each contact's perception of case needs. Ask if there are specific ways you could help with case activities.
- Remember that patience is a virtue and persistence--appropriately expressed--is also a virtue.

ADVOCACY SKILLS

ASSERTIVE, NON-ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE

Are these mere buzzwords tossed about by those who have become addicted to self-help literature, or are they meaningful guideposts for advocacy?

When you are working on behalf of an abused or neglected child, does it matter how you do what you do?

When you have strong feelings regarding an issue and see other viewpoints as being incorrect, do you say "I'm right. You're wrong?"

When someone else working on the case has failed to call you as promised, do you directly, honestly, and respectfully share your thoughts with them and then move on to current issues?

NON-ASSERTIVE behavior is passive, indirect, and displays inferiority by allowing the wants, needs or rights of others to be more important than your own. You let the other party win and become the victim/loser.

AGGRESSIVE behavior can be active or passive, direct, or indirect, honest, or dishonest - but it always puts your wants, needs and rights above those of others. You attempt to get your way by not allowing others a choice. You act superior to and disrespectful of others. You strive to "win" and make sure others "lose".

ASSERTIVE behavior is active, direct, and honest. You respect your own wants, needs and rights equally with those of others. You seek to obtain your objectives by influencing, listening, and negotiating so that others cooperate willingly. You strive for "win-win" outcomes.

BEHAVIOR CHANGES

Advocacy is as much "process" as "content". How you do what you do greatly affects the outcome. Of course, no one is consistently assertive. Although we all strive to advocate effectively, we are all human. We all display all three of the described behaviors at different times.

The laws governing dependency cases and the social services system (within which we volunteer as advocates) are founded on the belief that people can change. Just as the families with whom we work can change, we too can change. We can learn to become more assertive more of the time.

Is it easy? No. We have to accept responsibility for our feelings, thoughts, opinions and behaviors.

Is it worth the effort? Yes. Assertive behavior can help us successfully advocate for children more often and encounter less stress while doing it.

Adapted from: Developing Positive Assertiveness by Sam R. Loyd, Crisp Publications, 1988.

AN ASSERTIVE PHILOSOPHY

Everyone has well practiced communication habits and long-standing attitudes that support and defend these habits. Knowing that, I:

- accept the communication habits of others as fact;
- offer assertive communication and a "win-win" attitude even when others are offering nonassertive or aggressive styles;

- understand that people change only when they choose to change;
- select my personal standard of communication rather than react to those of others;
- know others are different from me and all kinds of people are OK;
- accept responsibility for my feelings, thoughts, opinions, and behavior and realize I cannot be responsible for the feelings, thoughts, opinions and behaviors of others;
- accept that every relationship involves each person having 50% of the responsibility for the success or failure of that relationship;
- know that being nonassertive and aggressive is part of being human;
- Know that every assertive choice precludes a nonassertive or aggressive choice and improves the chances for success at work and at home.

CHOOSE ASSERTIVE WORDS CAREFULLY

Use I statements rather than “you” statements.

“You always interrupt me.” (Aggressive)

“I would like to complete my comment without interruption.” (Assertive)

Use factual descriptions rather than judgmental remarks.

“This is a travesty of justice.” (Aggressive)

“The court ordered that the child be evaluated at the Clinic for Child Study on 2-2-94. No appointment has been made and the evaluation has not been done.” (Assertive)

Express thoughts, feelings, and opinions reflecting ownership.

“He gets me angry.” (Aggressive)

“I get angry when he shows up for court 2 hours late.” (Assertive)

“The only sensible thing to do is to change the goal to reunification.” (Aggressive)

“I think we should change the goal of the plan to reunification.” (Assertive)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Undoubtedly, the time will come when the CASA Volunteer and other parties involved in a case will disagree on how a case should be handled. It is preferable to have the parties work out the disagreement between them. If that is not possible, then a meeting will be convened and include the parties involved and CASA staff.

WHAT IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CHILD’S SAFETY?

It is rare, but on occasion a volunteer will hear about or witness an event and is concerned about the child’s safety. In these situations, it is imperative to follow policy to protect the child. **CASA Volunteers NEVER investigate allegations of abuse.**

MANDATED REPORTING: Centralized Intake: (855) 444-3911

Although CASA volunteers are not legally designated mandated reporters, CASA of Southwest Michigan, Inc. will instruct any staff member or volunteer that has witnessed or has knowledge of abuse and/or neglect to contact centralized intake (number above) immediately and also notify their immediate supervisor. If you are a legally designated mandated reporter you will remain such if you also act as a CASA Volunteer. The mandated reporter resource guide was handed out in training and may be accessed online

Take a Photo of this page, keep it on your phone so that you have IMMEDIATE instructions as to how to proceed:

What if.....

Do this.....

<p>You see, smell the presence of illegal substances or drug paraphernalia in any location where the child is present, including marijuana or excessive alcohol.</p>	<p>Document the date/time/location and contact. Contact centralized intake and notify the CASA staff and foster care worker as soon as possible.</p>
<p>You are with the child and they disclose current abuse by anyone</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine if the child is SAFE at that moment. Ask only enough questions of the child to determine if they are IMMEDIATELY safe. Do not ask more questions than absolutely necessary to determine safety. 2. If NOT safe, leave the home and call 911. 3. If SAFE, call centralized intake immediately 4. Maintain a calm, collected demeanor at all times 5. Thank the child for their disclosure
<p>You are with a child and they discuss past abuse that you (and others) have read in the child’s written file</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a calm, collected demeanor 2. Thank the child for sharing that information 3. Contact Centralized intake and report the abuse that was disclosed. Be as accurate and specific as possible 4. Contact CASA staff and the child’s worker to report
<p>The child says “I have something to tell you but it’s a secret”</p>	<p>Is this a secret or a surprise (like a birthday present). Determine the difference. If it is a “secret” tell the child that you MUST disclose anything that impacts their safety. The child may choose not to tell you, do not push. After the event, let CASA Staff know the incident happened.</p>

ADVOCACY PROMPTS/CHECKLIST

GENERAL CONTACTS:

- ✓ Have you made contact with the caseworker at least monthly?
- ✓ Have you updated the child's attorney as necessary?
- ✓ Have you met with the child every 7-10 days (in county) or monthly (out of county)?

HEALTH & WELL-BEING:

- ❖ Does the child appear to be happy & healthy?
- ❖ Do foster parents, biological parents, teachers, or other professionals have concerns regarding the child's health/well-being?
- ❖ Do you have any safety concerns regarding the child's current placement?
- ❖ Have you reviewed any medical reports? If so, are recommendations being followed?
- ❖ Have you had contact with the child's healthcare provider and/or counselor/therapist?
- ❖ Is there a trauma assessment or other type of assessment? If so, are recommendations being followed (or is there a viable reason they cannot be at this time?)
- ❖ Has the child been prescribed medications? Which ones?
- ❖ Depending on the child's age, is the child aware of the Michigan Foster Care Children's Bill of Rights?
- ❖ What additional services/supports would improve the child's health & well-being?
- ❖ Has the child been able to participate in appropriate pro-social activities (sports, camps, clubs, art classes, volunteer opportunities, etc.) that interest them?

❖ EDUCATION:

- ❖ Is the child attending school regularly?
- ❖ Is the child doing well in school?
- ❖ Are they working at grade level?
- ❖ Does the child have an IEP or 504 plan? Do you have a copy?
- ❖ Have you attended an IEP or 504 meeting? If not, when is the next meeting due to occur (they should be held annually)? Is the school following the plan?
- ❖ If the child has moved schools, were they told they could stay at their school of origin? or was a school move in their best interests?
- ❖ Are you in regular contact with the child's teacher and/or school counselor?
- ❖ If the child is 0-4 years of age, has an Early On Assessment been completed, if necessary? If so, what were the findings/recommendations? Are they being followed?

- ❖ Do you have concerns regarding the child's development?
- ❖ If the child is in high school, are they aware of free college options?
- ❖ What additional supports would improve the child's success in school?

COURT HEARINGS/ORDERS:

- ❖ Are court orders being followed?
- ❖ Is the child interested in attending court or providing a letter, video, etc. to the court?
- ❖ What can be done to facilitate permanency for the child more quickly?

FAMILY:

- ❖ Is the child with their siblings? If not, is there a legitimate reason?
- ❖ If sibling are separated, are there sibling visits taking place? If not, why?
- ❖ Is the foster home a good fit for the child? Safe?
- ❖ Do you have regular contact with the foster parents?
- ❖ Does the child visit with their biological parent(s)? If not, is there a legitimate reason? If yes, have you observed visits?
- ❖ Does the environment, frequency, and duration of visits meet the child's needs? Are the parents' behaviors appropriate during visits?
- ❖ Have you spoken to the child about who is important to them in their lives?
- ❖ Does the child have contact or visits with significant individuals in their lives?
- ❖ If the concurrent plan is adoption or guardianship, has DHHS identified viable family members that may be an adoptive resource or provide a familial connection for the child?
- ❖ Does the child have cultural or other identity-related connects in foster care? (ex. Native American, LGBTQ, Hispanic)?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR YOUR INVESTIGATION

CASA Staff is always willing to assist you as you gather information.

Source	Type of Information/Assistance
Child Caseworkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be able to discuss their investigation and provide a report (rare) • Service plan and updated service plan • Any recent psychological reports or trauma assessments • Child's prior IEP document or 504 plan
Foster Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific information about the child's daily life and about the child's behavior related to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visits with parents and siblings 2. Adjustments in school 3. Behavior problems and strengths 4. Medical concerns 5. Contacts made by parents through letters, phone calls, etc.. 6. Child's daily functioning and 7. Adjustments to separation/loss
Child's Teacher, <i>see sample letter for child's school (next page)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's behavior at school • Educational problems or delays, strengths • Changes in behavior • Child's appearance • Peer relationships • Grades • Parental involvement • Likes/Dislikes • Attendance prior / post removal • School nurse reports • School counselor reports • IEP or 504 plan and progress in the plans
Medical Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's medical condition as related to the abuse • Past medical history, medical records. • Follow-up services that may be required to address medical conditions resulting from abuse and /or neglect • A particular medical condition that should come to the attention of the caseworker. Foster parents, courts, etc.. • Contact with parent(s), if any. • Must obtain Release or Court Order to view/discuss medical records

<p>Parents (if safe and consent from attorney received)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise them that you have been appointed to the case. • Can describe any omissions or extenuating circumstances they feel are important • Ask them about their child-same questions as foster parents and more: child’s developmental milestones, joys, fears, etc.
<p>Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can describe what they saw happening as it relates to the life of the child. • May be able to identify potential resources for the child and family.
<p>Child Interviews <i>(Please note that it is not the role of the CASA volunteer to interview a child about the allegations; many of the children have been interviewed many times and additional interviews may be harmful to the child and to any potential criminal prosecution)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If verbal, children can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss history of their family situation 2. Provide information about relationships (parent, families, foster families) 3. Discuss wishes and desires for future 4. Identify challenges or areas in need of help 5. Share likes/dislikes 6. Discuss visits with parents, siblings, other family
<p>Child Observation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children’s behavior can be observed for information relating to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Affect 2. Moods, mood changes 3. Developmental stages 4. Verbal ability 5. Relationships, interactions with others 6. Intellectual ability
<p>Court</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court file that includes all prior orders and psychological reports

SAMPLE LETTER WHEN CONTACTING THE CHILD’S SCHOOL

Before requesting information from a child’s school, a brief letter (or phone call) to the school secretary or principal with a copy of the CASA order is necessary. Staff will gladly assist you with this however, if you would like to send a letter on your own, a copy is provided:

To whom it may concern:

*The Court Appointed Special Advocate Program was recently appointed by the Berrien County Family Court to advocate on behalf of **CHILD**. Our Order of Appointment is enclosed.*

If you are unfamiliar, CASA trains volunteers as Court Appointed Special Advocates (or CASA volunteers). CASA volunteers are appointed by the judge to a child or sibling group for the duration of the foster care case. The role of the volunteer supports foster parents, DHHS case workers, private agencies and the Court to ensure the child or sibling group is receiving needed services and working towards a safe and permanent home.

Our volunteers are highly trained, highly supervised and fully background checked by the court. CASA Volunteers meet with the children as often as possible in various settings, attend case related meetings/Family Team Meetings, observe parent visits, write a brief Court Report with recommendations, communicate with you as able, facilitate solutions in the best interest of the child and attend court. They serve as an extra set of eyes and ears and a voice for the child. All volunteers maintain strict confidentiality.

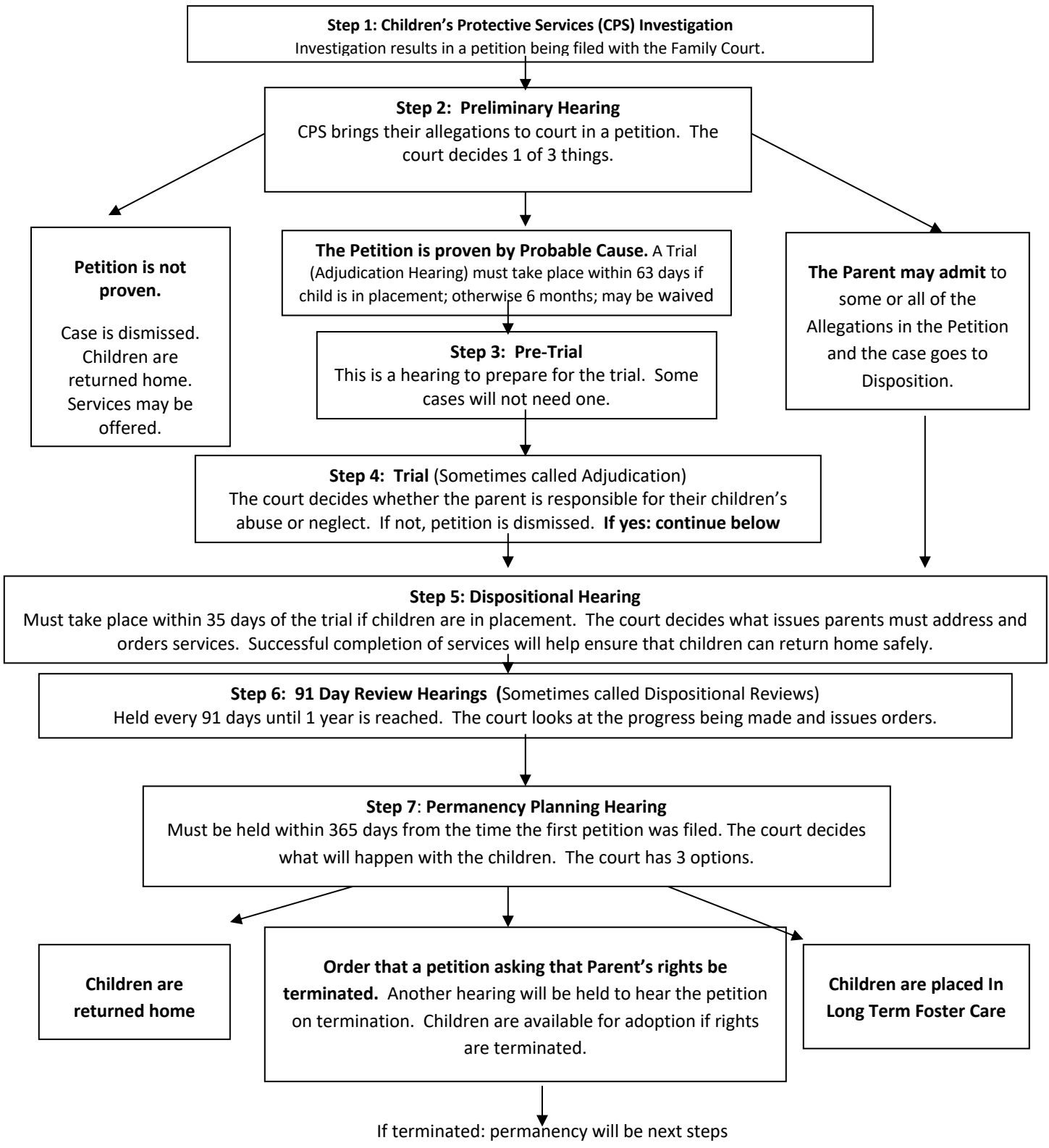
*I am the volunteer for **CHILD** and would like to reach out to learn more about **CHILD’s** educational journey and ways we work with his teachers so that he can thrive academically. If you have any questions you are always welcome to contact me or our program director Jamie Brooks at 269/934-3707 or jamie@casaswmi.org.*

We are looking forward to working with you and supporting your students.

Very truly yours,

Signature

Child Protective Proceeding



FORMS

The following forms are to be used by the volunteer for reporting or case management purposes.

- CASA Monthly Activity Log (sample) — Required monthly. Use electronic version
- CASA Court Report Form (required 15 days prior to hearing)

CASA MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

AutoSave On 2020 Monthly Activity Log Blank Template - Saved Search Jamie Brooks JB

File Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Help QuickBooks Share Comments

P14

CASA MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG																
For:											Month of:					
Total Time											0					
Total Miles											0					
Date	Volunteer	Case	Phone or Text	Email	Child Visit	School Visit	Office Visit	Court Visit	Mileage (Miles)	Time (Mins)	Contact / Notes	Child outside county/pre-adoptive stable/pre-return/AWO L	Was the child/ren you serve safe in their home or foster home each day this month	Did you provide ANY information about social, emotional, cognitive or physical development to any caregiver or teacher	Does your child participate in any out of school activities and/or receive school support (for anything)	Did you advocate for this child's education this month
Date of Activity	Your Last Name	Case Name	Put an "x" for type of activity being reported					#	#	Brief Description of Activity	Include this data on one line of your report monthly - you do not need to answer on every line of your log					
1/1/2020	Volunteer Last Name	Case Name			x				47	120	Visted child, sent emails, called DHHS, etc. *For calls/texts or emails you may combine into one line listing total time spent on that activity for the month	check this box if your child is in one of the above categories	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

Example Log JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV ...

Edit 90%

Type here to search 12:57 PM 5/19/2020

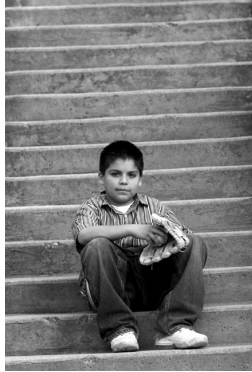
CASA COURT REPORT



**Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
Court Report**

IN THE MATTER OF:
JUDGE:
CHILD'S ATTORNEY:
ATTORNEY FOR F:
TYPE OF HEARING:
ADVOCATE REPORT #:

CASE:
HEARING OFFICER:
ATTORNEY FOR M:
DATE OF HEARING:
ADVOCATE NAME:
SUPERVISING AGENCY:



Insert Picture of CASA Child if you have one and if you have been granted permission to take a picture

VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the information stated herein I recommend that:

1. Recommendation 1
2. Recommendation 2, etc.

LAST IN COURT:

Date, type of hearing

CONTACTS SINCE LAST HEARING:

Please list or consolidate your list so the court has a sense of the amount of time you have provided in this matter

CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT:

1. AT SCHOOL:

Some ideas: How is the child doing in school regarding attendance, grades, behavior. What has been put in place to help, what is working, what isn't. Does the child have an IEP, special needs? How does the child interact socially in school, do they have friends?

2. IN THE FOSTER HOME/RELATIVE PLACEMENT:

Some ideas: does the child get along with the foster parents, are they comfortable, safe, adapting well. What is working, what isn't?

3. CHILD'S VISITATION AND INTERACTION WITH FAMILY/SIBLINGS:

Some ideas: Is the child visiting regularly, how do they feel about the visits, what do they do during the visit, how do they act before/after the visit, what happens if a visit is cancelled?

4. MEDICAL ISSUES AND HOW THESE ARE BEING ADDRESSED:

Any diagnosis, any persistent medical condition, are they on medications, are the adults in their life able to manage this medical condition, have you spoken to their medical provider?

5. THERAPY:

Is the child in therapy, how long, how many therapists have they had, does the child feel therapy is helping, do they participate fully in therapy, does the child have a diagnosis and is the child medicated? If the child is medicated, are there

any side effects? Has medication recently changed? What are the pros/cons of the medication changes?

6. IN THE COMMUNITY:

Does the child participate in any sports, lessons, extra-curricular activities?

PARENTAL PROGRESS/OBSERVATIONS:

May include Orders, compliance with orders, observations at visits, etc.

THE NEEDS AND WISHES OF THE CHILDREN:

What does the child want you to tell the court, you may quote the child, if so indicate in the report that you are quoting the child. You may also attach a letter from the child with your court report if the child prefers.

ACTION STEPS BY THE ADVOCATE BEFORE THE NEXT HEARING:

What will you focus on during the next several months to assist?

Date: _____

CASA Volunteer:

CASA Program Manager

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

FOR CASA PROGRAM STAFF, ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PAID CONSULTANTS AND VOLUNTEERS:

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Southwest Michigan (CASASWMI) is committed to conducting business in accordance with the highest standards of ethics and complying with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. In furtherance of this commitment, the organization through its governing committee promotes ethical behavior in all facets of the organization and has adopted *CASA of Southwest Michigan Code of Ethics for Program Staff, board, committee and volunteers* ("Code of Ethics") which is incorporated herein by reference and acts as the overriding policy with respect to ethical considerations within the organization. The Code of Ethics prohibits conflicts of interest on behalf of CASASWMI Program Staff, CASASWMI Board Members, CASASWMI Committee Members, and Volunteers. Board and staff shall acknowledge compliance with this policy annually.

1. Definition of Conflict of Interest: CASASWMI Program Staff, volunteers, CASASWMI Board Members, CASASWMI Committee Members and paid consultants (hereafter "CASA members") must actively avoid and disclose all conflicts of interest, potential conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest occurs when an individual's private or personal interest interferes in any way with the interests of the CASASWMI organization, operation, or program. A conflict of interest may also arise when staff, volunteers or paid consultants, or a member of his or her immediate family¹, receives improper personal benefits as a result of his or her association with CASASWMI. CASA members should also be mindful of, and seek to avoid, conduct which could reasonably be construed as creating an appearance of a conflict of interest.

While this policy does not attempt to describe all possible conflicts of interest that could develop, the following are examples of conflicts of interest:

- A. receiving improper personal benefits (other than nominal gifts or gifts in recognition of service, less than \$25.00) as a result of your association with CASASWMI. This includes receipt of benefits from persons or entities that associate with CASASWMI, in cases where the benefit is provided in order to influence the CASA member in his/her role, or where acceptance of the benefit could otherwise reasonably create the appearance or the known future potential of a conflict of interest.

¹ As used herein, the term "immediate family" means a spouse, parents, children, siblings, mothers- and fathers-in-law, sons- and daughters-in-law, brothers- and sisters-in-law (including "step") and anyone - other than an employee - sharing your home.

- B. having prior knowledge of a child in care, their family or professional service provider who is being or has been served by CASASWMI;
 - C. engaging in conduct or activity that improperly interferes with the CASASWMI's existing or prospective business or volunteer relationships with third parties;
 - D. Using a CASA member's relationship with CASASWMI for personal gain in a manner other than that detailed in this policy;
 - E. Having a direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions or professional services of the CASASWMI organization
- 2. Immediate Disclosure:** Any conflict of interest, potential conflict or perceived conflict must be disclosed to the CASASWMI Executive Director, in writing, immediately after discovery of said conflict. The CASASWMI Executive Director and Board President, if necessary, shall examine the conflict and determine if the disclosing party is able to ethically carry out their duties despite the conflict.
- 3. Remediation of Conflict:** Once a conflict is disclosed the Executive Director shall:
- A. Document the conflict appropriately
 - B. Discuss the conflict with program staff and the board president, as necessary
 - C. If necessary, report the conflict, potential conflict, or perceived conflict which impact CASA operations to the CASASWMI Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall include a conflict of interest update on the agenda of all future CASASWMI Board Meetings.
 - D. Determine a further course of action to eliminate the conflict, the potential conflict, or the appearance of conflict. This course of action may include eliminating the exposure of the disclosing party to the source of the conflict or recusal of disclosing party.
- 4. Failure to Disclose:**
- A. Volunteers: Volunteers who fail to disclose a known conflict of interest as defined herein may be removed from their current cases, placed on inactive status, and/or terminated from the program.
 - B. Others: Consequences for failure to disclose a known, potential, or perceived conflict of interest may be determined by the Executive Director and/or board of directors in accordance with relevant policies and procedures and/or contract for services.

CASA CODE OF ETHICS

FOR CASA PROGRAM STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS, ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PAID CONSULTANTS AND VOLUNTEERS:

This Code of Ethics provides CASA of Southwest Michigan (CASASWMI) staff, paid consultants, Board members, committee members and volunteers (hereinafter collectively "members") with guidelines for professional behavior and ethical conduct.

CONDUCT

1. Members of CASASWMI will abide by the NCASA Code of Ethics and all laws and regulations governing their activities including relevant background checks as dictated by current NCASA Standards.
2. Members of CASASWMI will uphold the credibility and dignity of the CASA concept by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional, and humane manner.
3. Members of CASASWMI will not use their authority inappropriately, not condone any illegal act or unethical practices related to their program or their community.
4. CASASWMI Programs and individuals who are members of the National CASA Association may not use CASA to promote personal gain.
5. Members of CASASWMI will avoid any action which could adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity organization.
6. Members of CASASWMI will serve and respond to requests without bias because of age, gender, gender orientation, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, handicap, or religion.

CONFIDENTIALITY

7. Members of CASA SWMI will adhere to all relevant confidentiality policies that govern their role and/or the situation that calls for confidentiality.
8. Members of CASASWMI will respect the right to privacy of all individuals and will keep information about CASA cases confidential.
9. Members of CASASWMI will not use confidential information obtained through their work with CASA for personal benefit.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

10. Members of CASASWMI must be trained in the operations of the court and child welfare systems, and in the nature of child abuse and neglect.
11. Members of CASASWMI must respect a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment that meets the child's best interests.

NATIONAL AFFILIATION

12. Official CASA designations may be used only for purposes in accordance with the goals and purposes of the National CASA Association.

COMPLIANCE

13. The CASASWMI Board of Directors shall monitor compliance with the Code of Ethics in accordance with this policy when the board is notified of such.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:

FOR CASA PROGRAM STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS, ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PAID CONSULTANTS AND VOLUNTEERS:

This Confidentiality Policy provides CASA of Southwest Michigan (CASASWMI) staff, paid consultants, board members, advisory committee members and volunteers (hereinafter collectively "members") with guidelines for professional behavior and ethical conduct.

1. Members must respect children's and families' right to privacy in regard to personal information.
2. Members must adhere to the confidentiality restrictions imposed by law.
3. Disclosure or verification of confidential information shall not be made to anyone who is not authorized by the court to receive such information.
4. Case records and notes shall be secured and kept private and inaccessible to public view.
5. Discussions of case-related information are not to be held in hallways, elevators, or other public places.
6. No one outside of CASA program personnel may have access to CASA volunteer's case record without a court order. Copies of the CASA volunteer's Report to the Court are provided prior to a court review or hearing to the child protective services caseworker and to parents or their attorneys.
7. Photos of children may only be obtained with written permission of the caseworker, court or guardian of the child. They may ONLY be used to add to court reports
8. Any confidential materials received from another individual or agency, including all information kept on file for governing board, advisory committee members, staff volunteers and donors, may not be disclosed to anyone outside the CASA program's professional staff, except by court order or written consent of the party involved.
9. Volunteers reaffirm their adherence to these policies upon acceptance of each case serving children.

Social Media Policy and Guidance:

FOR CASA VOLUNTEERS:

Social media, when used appropriately, can be a powerful tool to increase awareness, support, and sense of community for those of us engaged in advocacy for abused and neglected children. We believe that a thoughtful approach to online conversation and interaction among people online (on blogs, social networking, link-sharing, etc.) can enhance the reputation of our program, increase awareness, and help recruit needed supporters and volunteers.

CASA SWMI encourages CASA staff, board members and volunteers to join the global online conversation, we also believe it is important that those who choose to do so understand what is recommended, expected and required when they discuss CASA-related topics—whether at work or on their own time. Our ability to serve children as a national cause depends on the trust and support of the American public, and it is critical that we tell our story well—and handle the confidential information entrusted to us responsibly.

The following 10 guidelines disseminated by The National CASA Association and will help you engage in online conversations about your involvement with the CASA program and mission in a way that is appropriate:

10 Online Communication and Social Media Guidelines

1. **Be transparent.** Identify yourself and your role at the CASA program (staff/volunteer/board member) when you discuss CASA-related matters. Write in the first person. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. Be clear that you are speaking for yourself, that the opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of National CASA or your state or local CASA program (unless, of course, you are posting as part of your employment responsibilities for a program—as a communications or online outreach manager, for example).
2. **Always comply with the law in regard to copyright/plagiarism.** Never post someone else’s work without their express permission (other than short quotes that comply with the “fair use” exceptions).
3. **Be aware of laws related to libel and defamation of character.** Defamation of character can lead to lawsuits against the author of the statement and will reflect negatively on the CASA cause. In choosing your words or content, imagine your supervisor and your family reading everything you post.
4. **Be respectful.** Don’t pick fights. Be the first to admit and correct your own mistakes. You should show proper consideration for other’s privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.

5. **Be considerate.** Remember that anyone, including fellow volunteers and CASA staff, may be actively reading what you publish online. Refrain from any communication intended to bash or embarrass your state or local CASA program, families, board members, donors, or your colleagues. If you have suggestions for improvements, please state them constructively or, better yet, go through the proper channels to air your concerns and share your suggestions.

6. **Be accurate.** Even though your posts may be primarily made up of personal opinion, do your research well and check that your facts are accurate. Make sure you have permission to post any copyrighted or confidential information (e.g., images, statistics), and be careful about posting or linking to items that may contain viruses.

7. **Be committed.** If you decide to jump into online communication, do so with a commitment to post regularly and well. Link to others and show your unique contributions. Make it interesting and have fun!

8. **Try to add value.** Does your posting provide worthwhile information and perspective? Does it help you; your coworkers, volunteers and supporters better understand and feel more connected to our cause? Does it build a positive sense of community?

9. **Respect work commitments.** Please remember that blogging and other social networking activities—unless specifically assigned as part of your employment—are personal and should be done on your own time. The obvious exception is if you have specifically been assigned to perform an online activity related to your responsibilities as a CASA employee or volunteer.

10. **Don't reveal confidential information.** Sharing stories that illustrate the value of CASA advocacy for children is often the most powerful way to engage the public in our cause and promote empathy for the children we serve. However, National CASA Quality Assurance standards require:

Respect for the children's and families' rights to privacy in regard to personal information

Adherence to the confidentiality restrictions imposed by law and CASA policies and procedures

It is unacceptable to discuss online any identifiable details of cases. It is acceptable to discuss general details and to use non-identifying pseudonyms so long as the information provided does not contain information recognizable to the family or others associated with the family or case. For example, use general terms such as “youth” instead of “13-year-old girl.” You should be careful to protect the dignity of families, children, and social agencies, even if they are not named.

Volunteers and staff should not link to personal pages (or become online “friends”) of families or children they may encounter in their capacity with the CASA program. This includes email addresses, blogs, photo sharing sites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

Online communications and social media tools enable individuals to share insights and information—and express opinions—within the context of a globally distributed conversation. They support the democratization of knowledge and information and transform all of us from simply content consumers to

content producers. If we follow the above guidelines, this exciting, evolving technology can be harnessed to help us all make a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY:

FOR CASA PROGRAM STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS, ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PAID CONSULTANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Policy located in Article XIII-Bylaws:

13.1 General. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to enable and encourage the Corporation's employees, governing body members and volunteers to raise serious concerns within the corporation prior to seeking resolution outside the organization. As employees and representatives of the corporation, honesty and integrity must be practiced in fulfilling responsibilities and all applicable laws and regulations must be followed.

13.2 Reporting Responsibility. It is the responsibility of all employees, governing body members and volunteers to comply with the corporation. policies and all applicable laws and regulations, and report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

13.3 Reporting Violations.

Employees and Volunteers: the Corporation has an open door policy and encourages employees or volunteers to share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee or volunteer's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if an employee or volunteer is not comfortable speaking with their supervisor or they are not satisfied with their supervisor's response, they are encouraged to speak with the board president. If the employee or volunteer are not comfortable speaking with the board president they are encouraged to speak with the board vice president, or another board member they are comfortable approaching.

Board Members: Members of the board of directors are required to report suspected violations of the Corporation's policies or relevant laws and regulations to the board president. If an individual is not comfortable speaking with the board president, they are encouraged to speak with the board vice-president, or another board member they are comfortable approaching.

13.4 Confidentiality. Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible that is consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

13.5 Acting in Good Faith. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing there is indication of a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

13.6 No Retaliation. No employees, governing body members or volunteers who in good faith report a suspected violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence based on the reporting of such a violation. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

13.7 Handling of Reported Violations. The Corporation's board president or his/her designee is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported concerns and, at his/her discretion, shall advise the Executive Director.

Any other board member contacted has a responsibility to contact the board or Executive Director to initiate an investigation of all reported suspected violations. This must be done in a timely manner. The board president will notify the sender within five business days that the report of suspected violation has been received. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. The board president is required to report to the board of directors at least annually on compliance activity.

Should the Corporation's employees, governing body members or volunteers feel that the process to report and/or investigate violations is inadequate; individuals can contact National CASA Member Services.

13.8 Accounting and Auditing Matters. The Treasurer of the board of directors shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Treasurer shall immediately notify the committee of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

ADDITIONAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

1. At the conclusion of a case, please return any files or materials regarding the child to the program office
2. You may not take photos or images of the children you serve unless those images are used on a court report

A FINAL THOUGHT

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered; forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives; be kind anyway.

If you are successful you will win some false friends and true enemies; succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; it was never between you and them anyway.

--Mother Teresa