



CASA Family Court Acronym & Terms Guide

Court Roles & Agencies

- CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate; a trained volunteer who advocates for the best interests of the child (trademark of National CASA).
- GAL – Guardian ad Litem; the child’s attorney in Kentucky, appointed in every case.
- AOC – Administrative Office of the Courts; administrative arm of the state court system.
- CHFS / The Cabinet – Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky agency responsible for child protection and family services.
- DCBS – Department for Community Based Services; division within CHFS that handles child welfare cases.
- CPS – Child Protective Services.
- DJJ – Department of Juvenile Justice.
- DOJ – Department of Justice.
- LFUCG – Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.
- KVC – Service provider often used in DNA cases for Impact and Family Preservation services.
- CAC – Child Advocacy Center; provides coordinated services for child abuse investigations.

Court Types & Case Categories

- DNA Court – Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse Court.
- Dependency – Civil court proceedings where a child is found dependent due to an unfit home environment through no fault of the parent/guardian.
- Circuit Court (CI Court) – Higher-level trial court handling certain family and juvenile cases.

Court Hearings & Legal Process

- TRH / Initial Hearing / Arraignment – Temporary Removal Hearing; first step in DNA process following an Emergency Custody Order.
- ARR – Arraignment.
- CFA – Continued First Appearance.
- Adj. / AH – Adjudication Hearing; court determines whether abuse, neglect, or dependency occurred.
- DISPO / Disposition – Hearing where court decides placement and orders services; CASA submits first report.
- Review – Periodic court date to assess case progress; CASA submits a report.
- APR – Annual Permanency Review.
- PPR – Permanency Planning Review.
- PT / PTC / TEP – Pretrial Conference / To Enter Plea.
- CONT – Continuance; court date is postponed.
- TPR – Termination of Parental Rights.
- RTC – Return to Custody.



Court Orders & Legal Actions

- ECO – Emergency Custody Order.
- EPO – Emergency Protective Order.
- DVO – Domestic Violence Order.
- Waiver – Legal setting aside of a requirement (e.g., waiver of reasonable efforts).
- Stipulate – To agree to facts or conditions without contest.
- Ex Parte – Communication with the judge by only one party; CASA volunteers may not engage in ex parte communication.

Placement & Permanency

- OOHC – Out-of-Home Care.
- FC – Foster Care.
- KIN / RR – Kinship Care / Relative Resource.
- ICPC – Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.
- APPLA / PPLA – Another (or Permanent) Planned Living Arrangement; used primarily for older youth.
- IL – Independent Living (older youth transitioning out of care).

Plans, Meetings & Assessments

- ISP / Case Plan – Individual Service Plan developed by CHFS.
- FTM – Family Team Meeting.
- Genogram – Family relationship diagram.
- Recommendations – Section of CASA court report suggesting court orders.

Treatment, Evaluation & Service Providers

- BATS – Blue Waters Assessment & Testing Services; court-ordered drug screening.
- CAPS – Community Alternative Program Services; court-ordered drug screening.
- CATS – Comprehensive Assessment & Training Services.
- CATTTI – Child and Adolescent Trauma Treatment Training Institute.
- START – Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team.
- TAP – Targeted Assessment Program (UK / CHFS).
- The NEST – Agency providing parenting classes, therapy, and daycare.

Education & Child Services

- IEP – Individual Education Plan.
- 504 Plan – School accommodation plan under federal law.
- SSI – Supplemental Security Income.
- WIC – Women, Infants, and Children Program.
- SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.



Federal Laws & Programs

- ASFA – Adoption and Safe Families Act.
- CAPTA – Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.
- ICWA – Indian Child Welfare Act.
- Title IV-E – Federal funding for foster care and adoption services.
- VAWA – Violence Against Women Act.
- VOCA – Victims of Crime Act.
- VPA – Volunteer Protection Act.

Health & Behavioral Terms

- MH – Mental Health.
- SA / SUD – Substance Abuse / Substance Use Disorder.
- FAS / FASD – Fetal Alcohol Syndrome / Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.
- UR – Urinalysis / Drug Screen.

Administrative & Documentation

- Affiant – Person making a sworn written statement.
- AFE – Affidavit.
- TWIST – The Workers Information System Technology; CHFS computer system.
- DNA (Did Not Appear) – Failure to attend scheduled court or services.
- H&P – History and Physical.
- PSI – Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation.

Latin & Legal Terms Commonly Used in Court

- In Loco Parentis – Acting in place of a parent.
- Parens Patriae – State's authority to act on behalf of a child.
- Prima Facie – Evidence sufficient on its face.
- Pro Se – Representing oneself in court.

