

National CASA Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs

7. E. Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

1. The roles and responsibilities of the CASA/GAL volunteer are clearly communicated through written policies, job descriptions and training, and are reinforced through the supervisory process.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains a current manual of volunteer policies and procedures.
3. Each volunteer receives a copy of the volunteer policies and procedures and provides signed acknowledgement of reading and understanding the policies.
4. The CASA/GAL program volunteer policies and procedures specify the role of the CASA/GAL volunteer, developed with the input and approval of the court (if not already determined by statute).
5. Written roles and responsibilities should include the following. The volunteer will:
 - a. Obtain first hand a clear understanding of the needs and situation of the child by reviewing all relevant documents and records and interviewing the child, parents, social workers, teachers and other persons to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation.
 - b. Identify and advocate for the best interest of the child.
 - c. Seek cooperative solutions by acting as a facilitator among parties.
 - d. Provide at every hearing reports which include findings and recommendations.
 - e. Appear at all hearings to advocate for the child's best interests and provide testimony when necessary.
 - f. Have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child to ensure in-depth knowledge of the case and make fact-based recommendations to the court. The CASA/GAL volunteer shall meet in-person with the child once every thirty (30) days at a minimum. An exception may be granted at the discretion of program staff; however, the justification and reasons for a decision to permit less frequent in-person contact must be documented.
 - g. An exception may be granted in the discretion of the CASA program staff; however, the decision to permit a less frequent in person contact shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception.

- h. Make recommendations for specific appropriate services for the child and, when appropriate, the child's family.
 - i. Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child.
 - j. Monitor implementation of service plans and court orders assuring that court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner and that review hearings are held in accordance with the law.
 - k. Inform the court promptly of important developments in the case through appropriate means as determined by court rules or statute.
 - l. Advocate for the child's best interests in the community by interfacing with mental health, educational and other community systems to assure that the child's needs in these areas are met.
 - m. Participate in all scheduled case conferences with supervisory staff.
 - n. Participate in in-service training.
 - o. Maintain complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
 - p. Return case files to the program after the case is closed
6. A volunteer will not be assigned more than two cases at a time. An exception may be granted in the discretion of the CASA program staff; however, the decision to permit a higher caseload shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception. Under the exception, a volunteer will not be assigned to more than five cases.
7. The CASA/GAL program's volunteer policies and procedures include but are not limited to the following:
- a. The CASA/GAL volunteer reports any incident of child abuse or neglect, or any situation in which the CASA volunteer has reason to believe that a child is in imminent danger to the CASA/GAL supervisor and appropriate authorities, following state legal requirements for mandated reporting.
 - b. The CASA/GAL volunteer does not engage in the following activities:
 - Taking a child to the volunteer's home or any home other than the child's.
 - Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
 - Making placement arrangements for the child.
 - Giving money or expensive gifts to the child, the child's family or caregiver.
 - c. The CASA/GAL volunteer discusses all recommendations concerning the case with the program supervisor prior to submitting recommendations to the court.

- d. CASA/GAL program supervisors do not alter reports or recommendations without the knowledge and agreement of the CASA/GAL volunteer.
 - e. The CASA/GAL program has a clear policy to resolve conflicts between a volunteer and the program supervisor regarding the handling of a case, reporting of information or the recommendations to be included in a report to the court.
 - f. A CASA/GAL volunteer should not be related to any parties involved in the case or be employed in a position or with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest.
8. When the CASA/GAL program has made the decision to allow volunteers to provide transportation to children, it has the necessary liability insurance to cover the program. In addition it has policies and procedures which assure the CASA/GAL volunteer:
- a. Has passed a motor vehicles division record check.
 - b. Provides annually to the program a copy of a valid current driver's license, a safe driving record and adequate personal automobile insurance.
 - c. Obtains permission of the supervisor or director.
 - d. Obtains permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency.
 - e. Is knowledgeable of the potential personal risk of liability.
 - f. Chooses to accept the responsibility.