

## 2. Written Confidentiality Policy

The following Confidentiality Policy is excerpted from the Iowa CASA Program Policy and Procedures Manual Section 5:

### D. POLICY ON CONFIDENTIALITY

1. A CASA volunteer shall abide by the provisions of Iowa Code §235A.17 and shall maintain all information received from the child abuse registry or assessment report as confidential and shall not disseminate such information except when the re-dissemination is in connection with official duties, and the person receiving the information is eligible to receive that information on a firsthand basis.
2. Further, CASA volunteers are allowed to enter into discussions on their case where they would be reporting confidential information regarding the child and family with the following specific participants to the case:
  - a. Child's attorney
  - b. Parent's attorney
  - c. Grandparent's attorney or other custodial attorney if legal party status is granted
  - d. Department of Human Services case manager
  - e. A private service provider contracted by DHS if a reciprocal release of information form has been signed by the parent. See Resources 70a or 70b for Release/Obtain Information Forms. Due to HIPAA regulations, it may be best to use the release form from the facility in order to obtain mental health information.
  - f. Juvenile court officer
  - g. County attorney
  - h. Judge
3. All other communications with persons such as teachers, therapists, homemaker health aides, doctors, public health nurses, mental health workers, foster parents, etc., can occur only if the CASA volunteer receives information from these individuals and does not disseminate confidential information about the case directly to them.
4. However, as the child's court appointed advocate a CASA volunteer can enter into discussions with professionals at **staffings** where the case permanency plan for the child is being planned or modified. The CASA volunteer can, during a professional staffing, relate information regarding the case, as it will assist in the development of the case plan, etc., which would be in the best interest of the child.
5. Further, reports prepared by Iowa CASA volunteers will be disseminated by the local CASA Program only to the representatives of the legal parties on the case (DHS, juvenile court officer, county attorney, child's attorney, parent's attorneys, parent pro se, judge), according to local protocol or as court ordered, prior to each scheduled court hearing.
  - a. CASA reports are not available for dissemination to private agencies and professionals outside the realm of legal party status unless the court specifically authorized the release of this report or if there is a reciprocal release signed by a parent.
  - b. Reasonable precautions should be taken to guard confidential issues in regard to the use of technology such as email, computers, cell and cordless phones.