

National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers

As a CASA or GAL volunteer, ask yourself:

- What assumptions have I made about the cultural identity, genders, and background of this family?
- What is my understanding of this family's unique culture and circumstances?
- How are my recommendations specific to this child and this family?
- What evidence has supported the conclusions I have drawn, and how have I challenged unsupported assumptions?
- Have reasonable efforts (or active efforts in ICWA cases) been made in an individualized way to match the needs of the family?
- Have relatives been fully explored as preferred placement options as long as they can protect the child and support the permanency plan?
- Are there family members and/or other important people who have not been contacted who should be involved in this process?



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- What services are being offered to allow the child to remain at home or reunify the family (as applicable)? Are these services culturally appropriate? How are these services related to the safety threat?
- Are this child and family receiving the same level and tailoring of services as other children and families?

Other things to consider:

- If applicable, has Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS) been filed?
- If applicable, have individualized efforts been made to ensure the needs and safety of LGBTQ youth?
- Have all resources available to the family of the child for whom I am advocating been explored? (Military, federal, tribal, state/local, etc.)
- Are there organizations in the community that might serve as resources for the child for whom I am advocating?
- What active efforts have been made to determine if this child (children) is covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act? Has there been communication with the relevant tribe(s)? If not, has the Bureau of Indian Affairs been notified?

This checklist for volunteers is based on the research and with permission of our partners at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

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<http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/courts-catalyzing-change>

For more information on this resource or for other resources on disproportionality and disparate outcomes please contact staff@CASAforChildren.org