

Best Practices For CASA Volunteers:
Collecting Information And Reporting To The Court
On Children Taking Psychiatric Medications

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Suggestions for collecting information:

Social worker:

- Is the child on psychotropic medications?
- What medications?
- Dosages?
- When were medications prescribed?
- What is the diagnosis that is being treated?
- How was the diagnosis established?
- Who prescribed the medication? Credentials?
- Who administers medications?
- Was there a second opinion?
- Is use of this drug monitored or coordinated with other mental health providers such as counselors?
- Does feedback from caregivers, educators or counselors regularly get to the prescribing physician? How?
- How is behavioral change being assessed? Who is doing the assessment?
- Are any other providers prescribing medications for this child? Are they aware of each other and watching for interaction concerns?
- Do you have any medication concerns?
- Have other means of behavioral change been fully explored before using psychotropic drugs?

Caregiver:

- What providers prescribed medications for this child?
- What drugs and dosages are you actually administering?
- Are any drugs administered at school or daycare? By whom? (Check to see if they are being administered at school.)
- Have any behavioral changes been seen in the child? Who is doing the assessment?
- Do you have any medication concerns?

Parents:

- Do you have any medication concerns?

Youth:

- Do you have any medication concerns?

Prescriber:

- What are you prescribing? Dosages?
- What is the diagnosis that is being treated?

- What tests/evaluations were used to arrive at the diagnosis?
- What are your credentials?
- What references/sources do you use to prescribe psychotropic medications to children?
- How often do you see the youth?
- Have other evidence-based treatment methods to treat this condition, such as therapy or bio-feedback been explored?

Collecting information, cont'd.

Research / Internet/Google: (reliable sources!)

- Is the medication FDA approved for use in children?
- Does the FDA approve of the use of this medication to treat the condition for which it is prescribed? (Or is the use "off-label"?)
- What are reported concerns about the use of this drug? Any increase in suicidal behavior?
- Any drug interaction concerns?
- Are there other evidence-based treatment methods available to treat this condition, such as therapy or bio-feedback?

Suggestions for Reporting to the Court:

- List all medications and dosages, including start dates if known.
- Indicate any discrepancies between the amount prescribed and the amount administered.
- State who prescribes the medication and how it is monitored by that person.
- As best you can, state the purpose of the medication and whether that use is approved by the FDA for use in children.
- State what is reported by caregivers or teachers about whether the medication is working.
- State any concerns about medication by caregivers, teachers or counselors.
- State any opinions or concerns of the youth or parents.
- State any concerns about the medication that you have.
- Consult with your supervisor and consider recommending a second opinion, particularly when a child is placed on multiple psychotropic medications or an off label use of an antipsychotic medication is proposed.

Thank you to the King County Dependency CASA Program for sharing this document with the CASA network.