

Session 1: Getting Started—The Bleux Case

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Session Overview

This session introduces you to the online technology you'll use throughout the training, to your fellow training participants and to information about child welfare and the role of the CASA/GAL volunteer.

Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to...

- Demonstrate proficiency in the technologies used for the online components of this training course
- Identify your expectations for the training
- Define the CASA/GAL role and the parameters of the volunteer-child relationship
- Explain the origins of child welfare law in the United States
- Identify several significant laws that will impact your advocacy
- Articulate what constitutes child abuse and neglect
- Explain what is meant by “best interest” and “minimum sufficient level of care”
- Describe a child’s journey through the child welfare system
- Describe your local child welfare situation, court process and participants in a case
- Explain how your personal values may affect your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer
- Identify attitudes, values and skills that will help you perform your CASA/GAL volunteer work
- Begin to consider how to ask the right questions to evaluate what’s in a child’s best interest

Online Learning

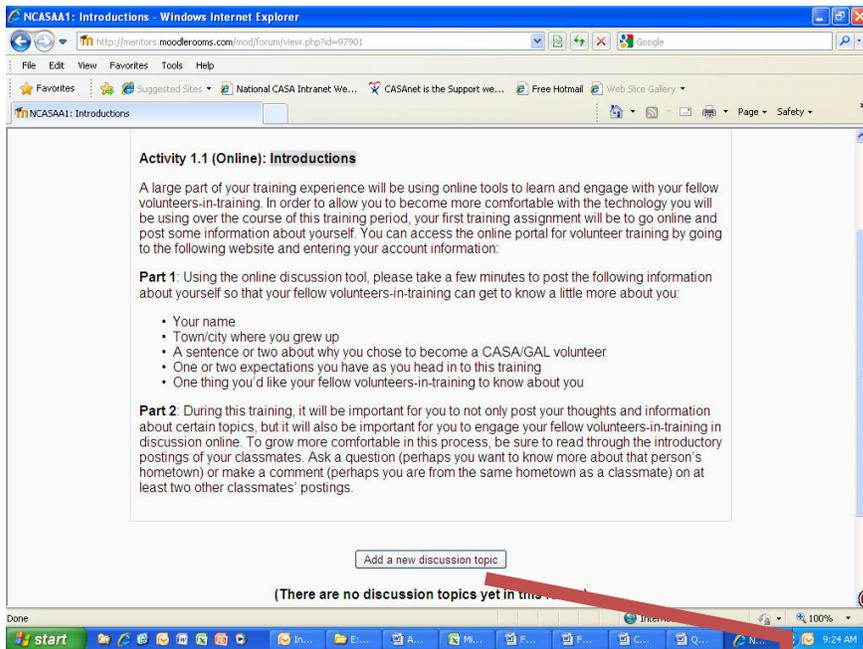
Getting Started Online

Activity 1.1: Introductions

A large part of your training experience will involve using online tools to learn and engage with your fellow volunteers-in-training. In order to help you become more comfortable with the technology you will be using over the course of this training period, your first training assignment is to go online and post some information about yourself. The facilitator will provide the web address and login information so you can get online.

Part 1: Click on the link to Activity 1.1 in the online training to begin this activity. To use the online discussion tool, click on “Add a new discussion topic.” Take a few minutes to post the following information about yourself so that your fellow volunteers-in-training can get to know a little bit about you:

- Your name
- Town/city where you grew up
- A sentence or two about why you chose to become a CASA/GAL volunteer
- One or two expectations you have as you head into this training
- One thing you’d like your fellow volunteers-in-training to know about you



Click on this box to introduce yourself to the rest of the training class.

Part 2: During the online portions of this training, you will be asked many times not only to post your thoughts and responses to certain topics and questions but also to engage in discussion with your fellow volunteers-in-training. To grow more comfortable in this process, read through your classmates' posts. Ask a question (perhaps you want to know more about a person's hometown) or make a comment (perhaps you are from the same hometown as a classmate) on at least two of your classmates' posts.

The Role of the CASA/GAL Volunteer

Activity 1.2: Testifying to the Impact of CASA/GAL Volunteers

Part 1: Throughout the course of this training, you will be introduced to content related to child welfare and then asked to apply what you've learned in a practice setting so that you have a better understanding of when and how this content will be useful to you as you prepare to take your first case. The first practice case you will work on during training involves the Bleux family. Download the initial case file online by clicking on the link to Part 1 of Activity 1.2 and read the information provided. You will return to this case during the in-person portion of this session, so it's important that you are familiar with these materials.

Part 2: Click on the link to Part 2 of Activity 1.2 to watch *Making a Lifelong Difference*, a video that gives a broad overview of the difference that a CASA/GAL volunteer can make in a child's life. As you watch the video, think about the various elements you read in the Bleux case file.

Part 3: After watching the video, consider how you might go about making a difference if you were assigned as the CASA/GAL volunteer for the Bleux case. Post your thoughts in the online forum.

Activity 1.3: The CASA/GAL Volunteer Role in Action

Part 1: Click on the link to Part 1 of Activity 1.3 to learn about the four essential roles of a CASA/GAL volunteer.

Part 2: Click on the link to Part 2 to view “John’s Story” from *Powerful Voices: Stories by Foster Youth*. As you watch the video, ask yourself several questions:

- Who provides support to John?
- What role does John’s CASA/GAL volunteer play in his life?
- If you were John’s CASA/GAL volunteer, is there anything you might do differently?

As you watch any of the youth videos from the *Powerful Voices: Stories by Foster Youth* series, be mindful that these videos were a collaboration between National CASA and the Center for Digital Storytelling. These stories are the creation of the storytellers. National CASA cannot edit or censor how the youth describe their relationships to their CASA/GAL volunteers. In some cases, these stories may include descriptions of actions by the volunteer that are prohibited in your particular program. Each state has different rules about interacting with children.

Part 3: Review the CASA/GAL volunteer job description and code of conduct provided by the facilitator. Then take a few moments to reflect on “John’s Story” and the four key roles of a CASA/GAL volunteer that you read about in Part 1. In the online discussion forum, post your responses to the questions you considered as you watched the video.

Part 4: Ask a question or make a comment on at least two other participants’ posts.

Remember: When you’re commenting on others’ posts, you may decide to empathize with, build upon or ask questions about someone else’s thoughts or ideas. However, when engaging your fellow classmates online, be sure that you’re approaching the online discussion from a place of genuine curiosity and desire to learn. This is not a forum in which it is acceptable to impose your values on others. Also keep in mind that when communicating online, body language and other nonverbal cues may get lost. Be sure to think about how attempts at humor or the tone/language you use may be interpreted or misinterpreted through this means of communication.

The Development of Child Welfare Laws

Activity 1.4: An Introduction to Child Welfare Laws

Part 1: Click on the link to Part 1 of Activity 1.4 and watch the short audio slideshow about the historical context of the treatment of children and the first documented case of child abuse in the United States.

Part 2: Read the following overview of child welfare laws in the United States. Then choose one of the laws and post a three- or four-sentence summary of how that law may impact your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer. In formulating your post, you may choose to use only the information provided in this manual or you may choose to do additional research on your own (speaking with CASA/GAL program staff, looking up additional information online, etc.).

Part 3: Read the information about your state child abuse and neglect statutes provided by the facilitator.

Developments in Child Welfare

- 1899: First juvenile court (Chicago) placed dependent and delinquent children in homes for wayward youth or reform schools.
- 1910: X-ray technology was developed, eventually allowing doctors to detect subdural (under the skin) injuries and untreated fractures.
- 1938: First legal rights of children: Fair Labor Standards Act imposed restrictions on working hours and conditions.
- 1962: Dr. C. Henry Kempe created the diagnosis for battered child syndrome.
- 1965: Mandatory reporting laws were in place in all states.

Beginning in the 1970s, the United States Congress became aware (along with the rest of the nation) that the child welfare system was not adequately protecting children. From a historical perspective, it can be said that we are still relatively new to the concepts of protecting abused and neglected children and developing appropriate systems, methods and programs to cope with the problems these children face.

The chart on the following pages outlines information about federal child abuse and neglect laws. You do not need to memorize these laws; just become familiar with them.

Federal Child Abuse & Neglect Laws

1974: Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA), P.L. 93-247, amended 1996

Created the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect and earmarked federal funds for states to establish special programs for child victims of abuse or neglect.

This law requires that states:

- Have child abuse and neglect reporting laws
- Investigate reports of abuse and neglect
- Educate the public about abuse and neglect
- Provide a guardian ad litem to every abused or neglected child whose case results in a judicial proceeding
- Maintain the confidentiality of child protective services records

For CASA/GAL volunteers

- Learn whether you, as a CASA/GAL volunteer, are a mandated reporter.
- Learn whether the guardian ad litem has to be an attorney in your state.

1978: Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Public Law 95-608

- Recognizes that Indian children have special rights as members of sovereign nations within the United States
- Responded to congressional hearings in the 1970s that revealed a pattern of public and private removal of Indian children from their homes, undermining their families and threatening tribal survival and Native American cultures.
- Was designed to implement the federal government's trust responsibility to the nations by protecting and preserving the bond between Indian children and their tribe and culture
- Sets up placement preference schemes for foster care placements and adoptions of children who have been determined to be Indian children
- Establishes the right of certain entities, including the tribe and the Indian custodian, if one exists, to appear as parties to child welfare cases
- Determines when and if a case should be transferred to tribal court
- Describes rights of the Indian child and the child's tribe

For CASA/GAL volunteers:

- Ask whether every child has Native heritage.
- Investigate tribal resources and services that can be of great benefit to the child.
- Be aware that jurisdiction can be transferred to the tribal court.
- Pay attention to the heritage and identity needs of the child.
- Remember that ASFA timelines do not apply to Indian children.
- Keep in mind that ICWA takes precedence over other federal and state law.
- The Cultural Competence/Diversity section of the National CASA Online Resource Library for volunteers provides articles and more in-depth information.
- The National Indian Child Welfare Association has several excellent packets of ICWA information available for a small charge.

Federal Child Abuse & Neglect Laws

1980: Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, Public Law 96-272

This law requires that states:

- Recruit culturally diverse foster and adoptive families
- Comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act
- Establish standards for foster family homes and review the standards periodically
- Set goals and plan for the number of children who will be in foster care for more than 24 months
- Provide “reasonable efforts” to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from his/her home or to make it possible for the child to return to his/her home
- Have a data collection and reporting system about the children in care

For CASA/GAL volunteers:

- Consider possible placements that respect child’s cultural heritage but do not limit his/her options.
- Learn the name of the data collection system used in your state:

1990: Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act

- Establishes federal requirements for the reporting and investigation of child abuse and neglect on tribal lands
- Requires background checks on individuals who have contact with Indian children (including foster and adoptive families)
- Authorizes funding for tribal child abuse prevention and treatment programs

1993: Court Improvement Legislation

Encourages reform in the court system

1994: Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA)

The goals of this law are to:

- Decrease the time children wait to be adopted
- Prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the placement of children and in the selection of foster and adoptive placements
- Facilitate the development of a diverse pool of foster and adoptive families

1996: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Amended

Amended to include Court Appointed Special Advocates as guardian ad litem

1997: Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Public Law 105-89

This act embodies three key principles:

- The safety of children is the paramount concern.
- Foster care is a temporary setting and not a place for children to grow up.
- Permanency planning should begin as soon as the child enters foster care.

This act directs timelines within which the child welfare system operates:

- Requires permanency plan within 12 months
- Requires dispositional hearing within 12 months of placement
- Requires court reviews every six months

1997: Volunteer Protection Act

Limits liability of volunteers

1999: Foster Care Independence Act

Addresses needs of older youth in foster care, particularly those aging out of the system

This act does the following:

- Allows states to serve youth up to age 21 regardless of whether or not they are eligible for the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
- Increases federal funding to assist and serve young people transitioning from foster care.
- Establishes the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, which strongly supports the dependency system's capacity to help youth make a healthy transition into adulthood (see information at right).
- Allows states to provide Medicaid to young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday.
- Increases the youth-assets limit from \$1,000 to \$10,000 without jeopardizing the youth's eligibility for Title IV-E-funded foster care.
- Ensures that foster parents have adequate preparation to care for the children placed in their home. This provision can be used to strengthen the preparation of foster parents to care for adolescents.
- Provides additional funding for adoption incentive payments.
- Mandates that states use a portion (up to 30%) of their independent-living program funds to provide room and board for youth aged 18 to 21 who have left foster care.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program does the following:

- States explicitly that "enrollment in Independent Living Programs can occur concurrently with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in adoptive families for older children in foster care," thereby clarifying that independent-living services should not be seen as an alternative to adoption for teens.
- Requires states to train both foster and adoptive parents (as well as group-care workers and case managers) about the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living.
- Reinforces the importance of providing personal and emotional support for children aging out of foster care, through the promotion of interactions with mentors and other dedicated adults.
- Specifies that independent-living services may be provided to young people at "various ages" and various stages of achieving independence, "including children waiting for adoption or other permanent options."

Other Laws That Affect CASA/GAL Volunteer Work

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires, among other things, permission or a court order to access "protected health information" for any individual. Your program will have information on how to access health records.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) assists some children, including those in foster care, in obtaining legal permanent residency.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act says that any entity that receives federal funds must provide a professional interpreter in court.

Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act: IV-E is the primary federal funding stream that partially reimburses states for foster care for qualified children. IV-B allots funding for targeted case management services. The state must pay all expenses for a child who is not IV-E eligible out of state general revenues. These expenses include foster care, therapy, etc.

The Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (VOCAA) protects the privacy rights of child victims or witnesses during the investigation or prosecution of a federal crime.

History of the CASA/GAL Volunteer Role

Guardian Ad Litem

The term “ad litem” means “for the suit” or “for the court case.” It is an old concept—in Anglo Saxon times, at common law, the king appointed a guardian ad litem to speak on behalf of a child or incompetent person.

As part of their general powers, judges today have the discretion to appoint a guardian ad litem (GAL) in all types of court matters. Some states require that the guardian ad litem be an attorney; others do not.

In 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) mandated the appointment of a guardian ad litem in child abuse and neglect cases; it was no longer up to the judge’s discretion.

Volunteer Guardians Ad litem

Judge David Soukup (Juvenile Court, King County, Seattle, Washington) was dissatisfied with the same case plans and same recommendations for child after child; he believed more individualized attention would produce better outcomes. Judge Soukup solicited ideas for system improvement from court staff. Out of these ideas evolved the idea for community volunteers to act as child advocates.

The Volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program began in King County in 1977. The guardian ad litem did not have to be an attorney. The program recruited volunteers from the community and provided training and support. Similar programs were developed in other states/localities as judges spread word of the concept.

National CASA

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (National CASA) was created in 1982 to support volunteer child advocate programs and increase the number of volunteer child advocates nationwide.

Hallmarks of a CASA/GAL volunteer program include:

- Advocacy for abused and neglected children in court
- Volunteers who are recruited, screened, trained, supervised, and supported
- Adherence to national standards

Programs go by many names—CASA, GAL, ProKids, Voices for Children, Child Advocates—but all have this in common: volunteers who advocate for abused and neglected children in the court system.

National CASA Mission

The National CASA Association, together with its state and local members, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.

National CASA standards describe the major criteria the CASA/GAL volunteer must meet. The following statements describe the CASA/GAL volunteer:

- An individual who has been screened and trained by the CASA/GAL program and appointed by the court to advocate for children who come into the court system primarily as a result of alleged abuse or neglect
- An individual who respects a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment that meets that child's best interests
- An individual who assures that the child's best interests are represented in the court at every stage of the case.

An Introduction to the Child Welfare System

Activity 1.5: A Child's Journey Through the Child Welfare System

Part 1: Click on the link to Part 1 of Activity 1.5 to watch an audio slideshow that introduces current information about child welfare in the United States and features a brief summary of the concepts of best interest and minimum sufficient level of care. Then read the following information.

The Facts About Child Abuse and Neglect

In the United States in 2009:

- There were approximately 702,000 documented cases of abuse or neglect.
- An estimated 1,770 children died as a result of identifiable abuse or neglect.
- The majority of child abuse and neglect deaths were children younger than 4 years old.
- Approximately 80% of abusers were the children's own birth parents.

From <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm09/cm09.pdf> <Accessed 2/25/11>

In the national CASA/GAL network in 2009:

- An estimated 237,095 children were served by all local CASA/GAL programs.
- An estimated 70,919 volunteers participated in all programs.
- An estimated 3,788 staff members were working alongside volunteers.

From *National CASA Association Local Program Survey Report 2009*.

It is not the CASA/GAL volunteer's role to determine whether or not certain actions constitute child abuse or neglect; the court will decide this. It is, however, necessary for CASA/GAL volunteers to be able to recognize signs of abuse and neglect in order to advocate for a safe home for a child. The following information will assist you in identifying potential signs of abuse or neglect.

What Constitutes Abuse and Neglect?

Child abuse can be seen as part of a continuum of behaviors. At the low end of the continuum are behaviors you might consider poor parenting or disrespectful behavior; at the high end are behaviors that lead directly or indirectly to the death of a child. See the table on the following pages in order to examine some specific examples of various types of child maltreatment.

Recognizing Abuse and Neglect

	Description	Indicators
Physical Abuse	<p>Intentionally harming a child, use of excessive force, reckless endangerment.</p> <p>In 2009, about 18% of the victims of child maltreatment were victims of physical abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruises, welts, and scars • Injuries in various stages of healing • Bite marks • Unexplained burns • Fractures • Injuries not fitting explanation • Internal damage or head injury
Sexual Abuse	<p>Engaging a child in any activity for an adult's own sexual gratification.</p> <p>In 2009, about 9.5% of the victims of child maltreatment were victims of sexual abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge • Sexual acting out • Child disclosure of abuse • Excessive masturbation • Physical injury to genital area • Pregnancy or STD at a young age • Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing • Depression, distress, or trauma • Extreme fear
Emotional Abuse	<p>The systematic diminishment of a child.</p> <p>It is designed to reduce a child's self-concept to the point where the child feels unworthy of respect, friendship, love and protection, the natural birthrights of all children.</p> <p>In 2009, about 7.6% of the victims of child maltreatment were victims of emotional abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habit disorders (thumb sucking, biting, rocking, enuresis) • Conduct disorders (withdrawal or antisocial behavior) • Behavior extremes • Overly adaptive behavior • Lags in emotional or intellectual development • Low self-esteem • Depression, suicide attempts

	Description	Indicators
Neglect	<p>Failure of a person responsible for a child’s welfare to provide necessary food, care, clothing, shelter or medical attention. Can also be failure to act when such failure interferes with a child’s health and safety.</p> <p>In 2009, about 80% of the victims of child maltreatment were victims of neglect.</p>	<p><i>Physical Signs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnourishment • Missed immunizations • Lack of dental care • Lack of supervision • Consistent dirtiness • Constant tiredness/listlessness <p><i>Material Signs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient/improper clothing • Filthy living conditions • Inadequate shelter • Insufficient food/poor nutrition

Statistics from www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm09/cm09.pdf <accessed 2/25/11>

The “Best Interest” Principle—What It Means

- A safe home
- A permanent home
- As quickly as possible

Parents typically decide what is best for their children and then provide it for them to the extent that they can. They are their children’s best advocates. The child protection system intervenes in families’ lives when parents cannot or will not protect, promote and provide for their children’s basic needs. A CASA/GAL volunteer becomes the advocate when the parents cannot—or will not—fulfill this role.

Judges use the “best interest of the child” standard when making their decisions in child abuse and neglect cases. Child welfare and juvenile court practitioners and scholars have debated the meaning of “best interest of the child” for years. Books have been written on the subject; however, there is still no concise legal definition for this standard. In cases where the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies, the law presumes that it is always in the best interest of an Indian child* to have the tribe determine what is best for the child’s future.

*This curriculum uses the terms “Indian child” and “Indian custodian” in accordance with the legal definitions set out in the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The Best Interest Principle: What National CASA Says

The CASA/GAL volunteer is guided by the “best interest” principle when advocating for a child. This means that the volunteer knows the child well enough to identify the child’s needs. The volunteer makes fact-based recommendations to the court about appropriate resources to meet those needs and informs the court of the child’s wishes, whether or not those wishes are, in the opinion of the CASA/GAL volunteer, in the child’s best interest.

Minimum Sufficient Level of Care (MSL)

Removing a child from his or her home because of abuse and/or neglect is a drastic remedy. Because removal is so traumatic for the child, both the law and good practice require that agencies keep the child in the home when it is possible to do so and still keep the child safe. Children should be removed only when parents cannot meet the “minimum sufficient level of care.” This standard describes what must be in place for the child to remain in his or her home. The same standard is also used to determine whether or not parents have made sufficient progress so that a child can be safely returned to the family home. The minimum sufficient level of care is determined by a number of factors, each of which must be looked at specifically in relation to the case at hand. Factors to consider include:

The Child’s Needs

Is the parent providing for the following needs at a basic level?

- Physical (food, clothing, shelter, medical care, safety, protection)
- Emotional (attachment between parent and child)
- Developmental (education, special help for children with disabilities)

Social Standards

Is the parent’s behavior within or outside commonly accepted child-rearing practices in our society?

Here are some examples: In terms of discipline, whipping a child with a belt was generally thought to be appropriate during the first half of the twentieth century but is now widely considered abusive. Contemporary families frequently use a short “time out” as a punishment for young children. In terms of school attendance, it is a widely held expectation that parents send all children to school (or home-school them) until they reach the age limit at which attendance is no longer compulsory. Social standards also apply in medical care, where immunizations and regular medical/dental care are the standard.

Community Standards

Does the parent’s behavior fall within reasonable limits, given the specific community in which the family resides?

Here are some examples: The age at which a child can be safely left alone varies significantly from urban to suburban to rural communities. The age at which a child

is deemed old enough to care for other children is largely determined by cultural and community norms. Even something as simple as sending a 9-year-old child to the store might fall within or outside those standards, depending on neighborhood safety, the distance and traffic patterns, the weather, the child's clothing, the time of day or night, the ability of the child and the necessity of the purchase.

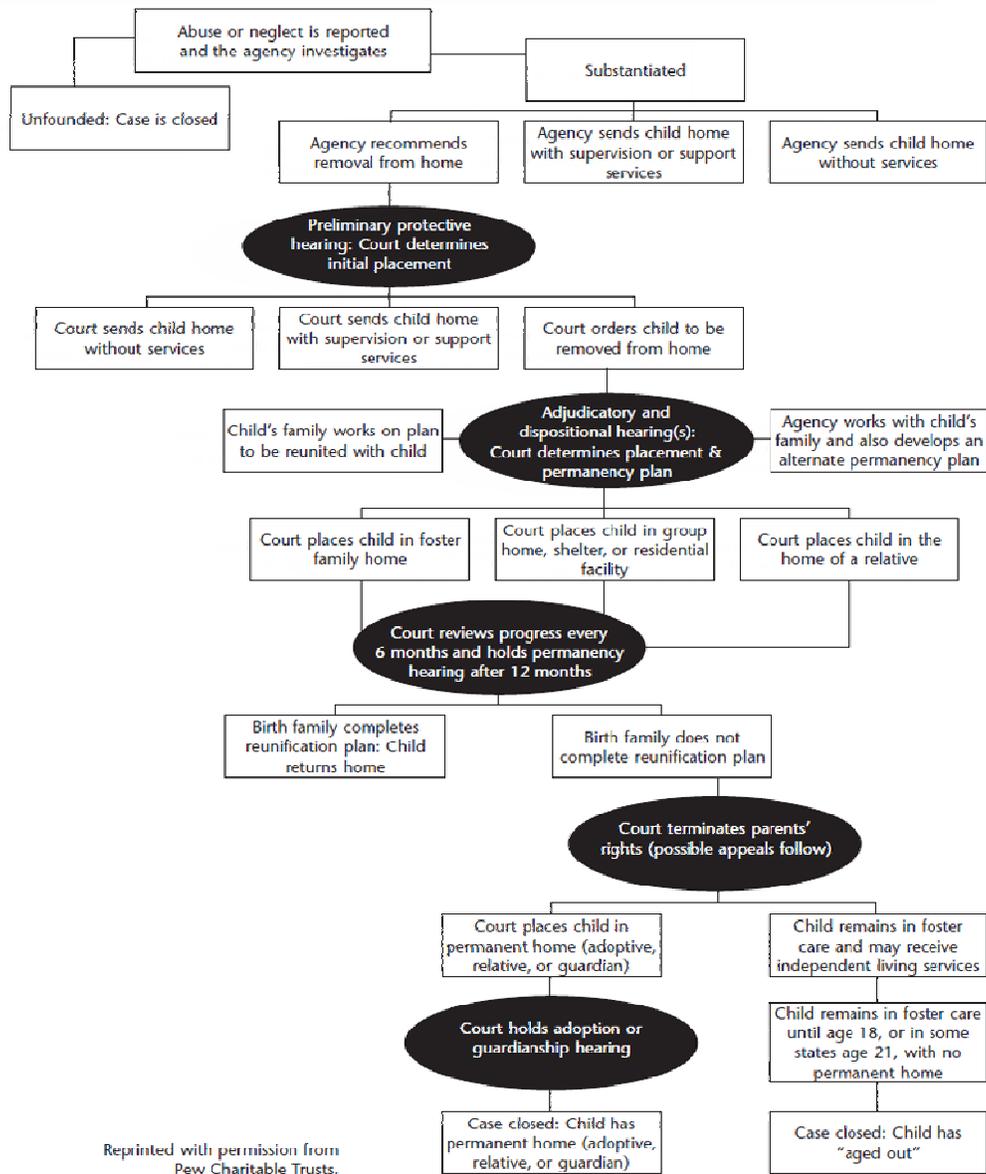
Communities can be geographical or cultural. An example of a nongeographical, cultural community is a Native American tribe in which members live in a variety of locales but still share a common child-rearing standard. According to the Indian Child Welfare Act, the minimum sufficient level of care standard must reflect the community standards of the tribe of the Indian child.

Activity 1.5: A Child's Journey Through the Child Welfare System

Part 2: Click on the link to Part 2 of Activity 1.5 to learn about the child welfare system through the eyes of a child caught up in the system. Then read the information provided by the facilitator that outlines the court process in your area, including the hearings that occur at various points through the course of a dependency case.

Part 3: In the online discussion forum, post one word or phrase to describe how you feel after taking this short tour of the child welfare system.

A Child's Journey Through the Child Welfare System



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Activity 1.6: Introduction to the Court Report

Writing a clear and compelling court report is essential to your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Throughout this training, you will participate in activities that will gradually deepen your knowledge about court reports and increase your skills for writing an effective report. Click on the link to Activity 1.6 for an introduction to the CASA/GAL volunteer court report.

Congratulations! You've just completed the first online component of the training. When you come together in person, you will have an opportunity to begin putting faces with the names of your fellow participants. You will also have a chance to ask the facilitator any outstanding questions you may have as you conclude this first online component.

Be sure to bring to class this manual and any other materials you printed out during this online session.

In-Person Training

Getting Started In-Person

Activity 1.7: Putting a Face with the Name

Part 1: In pairs, introduce yourself to your partner (do you remember anything about your partner from what he or she posted online?). Share the following with each other:

- One reason you want to become a CASA/GAL volunteer
- One thing that stood out for you during the online portion of Session 1
- One thing you're most excited about as you begin training
- One concern that you have about volunteering

Part 2: Return to the large group and introduce yourself to your fellow participants by sharing your name and one word that describes your reason for volunteering.

Activity 1.8: Expectations

Think back to the expectations for training that you posted online in Activity 1.1. Have any of them changed? In the large group, share your expectations. Then listen as the facilitator describes what will be expected of you during training.

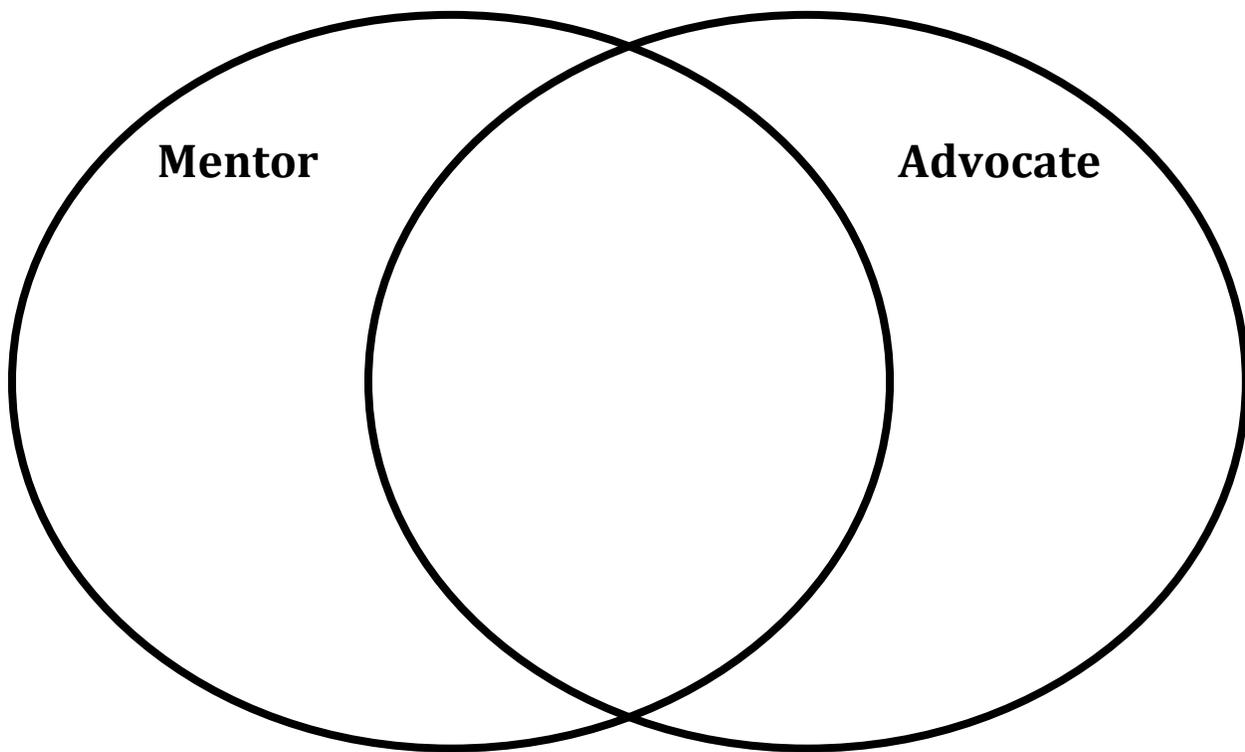
The Volunteer-Child Relationship

Establishing a relationship with the child for whom you're advocating is one of the most important things you do as a CASA/GAL volunteer. The ideal relationship is one that maximizes your ability to advocate successfully for the child. The following guidelines describe the parameters for your relationship and contacts with the child:

As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you have direct and sufficient contact with a child to carry out an independent and valid investigation of the child's circumstances, including the child's needs and wishes, so as to be able to make sound, thorough and objective recommendations in the child's best interest. This contact should occur in person to provide you with firsthand knowledge of the child and his/her unique personality, abilities and needs. While social contact is permitted with the child to develop trust and a meaningful relationship, you function as an objective advocate for the child and not as the child's attorney, caseworker, counselor, mentor or parental figure. You do not provide direct services to the child, such as supervising visitation; however, it is appropriate for you to observe visitation. Under no circumstances shall you take the child into your home, provide shelter for the child or take the child on an overnight outing.

Activity 1.9: Parameters of the Volunteer-Child Relationship

Part 1—Mentoring vs. Advocacy: There are some significant differences between the roles of mentor and volunteer advocate; yet there is also overlap. In small groups, use Post-its to record elements and characteristics that are unique to the role of mentor, elements and characteristics that are unique to the role of advocate, and elements and characteristics that are part of both roles. In the large group, you'll post your ideas on a flipchart and compare them with those from other groups.



Activity 1.9: Parameters of the Volunteer-Child Relationship

Part 2—Volunteer-Child Relationship Dilemmas: The facilitator will provide CASA/GAL Volunteer-Child Relationship Dilemma cards. Select one and read the dilemma. The facilitator will ask for volunteers to read aloud the situations on their cards. In the large group, brainstorm possible solutions to each dilemma.

Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

Activity 1.10: Seeing the Whole Child

In order to recognize child abuse or neglect, it's important to look at all aspects of a child's life and identify what makes for a happy, well-adjusted child. On the flipchart at the front of the room, you will see a circle divided into four quadrants. These quadrants represent four aspects of a child's life: the intellectual, the spiritual, the physical and the emotional. In the large group, brainstorm ideas of what makes for a happy child in each of these areas of life.

Activity 1.11: The Continuum of Abuse

Part 1: Child abuse can be seen as part of a continuum of behaviors. At the low end of the continuum are behaviors you might consider poor parenting or disrespectful behavior; at the high end are behaviors that lead directly or indirectly to the death of a child.

On the flipcharts at the front of the room, the facilitator has created continuums for physical abuse, emotional/verbal abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. In the large group, think of behaviors that you consider abusive or neglectful, and discuss where on the flipchart continuums they would fall.

Part 2: Look at the handout that contains your state statutes defining abuse and neglect. Still in the large group, identify which behaviors listed on the flipchart meet the legal definition of abuse or neglect and which do not.

Part 3: Consider what you read in the Bleux case. What behaviors described in that case would you consider abusive or neglectful?

Attitudes, Values and Skills That Guide the Work

Activity 1.12: Attitudes and Skills That Enhance the Work

Much of the information explored up to this point focuses on your role or duties as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Fulfilling duties is an important part of being a successful CASA/GAL volunteer, but it is only one part. Personal attitudes and skills are also very important.

Follow along as the facilitator presents information on attributes that will help you in your role as a CASA/GAL volunteer.

PROFESSIONALISM

Ethics, accountability, confidentiality, resourcefulness, critical thinking and good judgment

These skills/abilities can enhance your credibility and earn the respect of parties in a case. Professionalism and assertiveness can help you gain necessary information.

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE

Open-mindedness, respect, collaboration, self-awareness and assertiveness

These attitudes will help you be more successful in working with other people, particularly in gathering accurate information and making accurate interpretations of situations. As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you are expected to demonstrate respect and open-mindedness in your interactions with all parties to the case. Gathering information from children requires skills and attitudes different from those required when working with adults. Children may be frightened or healing from trauma. They are different emotionally and developmentally from adults and also from other children. Your listening and observation skills will help you gather a full picture of the child's situation.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Respect, flexibility, knowledge, self-awareness and empathy

What you do not understand may lead to inaccurate interpretations. Understanding your own culture and the differences between cultures will allow you to best serve children and their families. Your life experience (culture, era, geography, race, education, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, family dynamics, etc.) has led you to develop a particular perspective. Your unique perspective always influences how you interpret what you observe. The more aware you become of your personal perspective, the better able you will be to understand that others have different perspectives. In observing children and families, it is important to understand that

your perspective on families and parenting is likely to be different from those with whom you are working. (You will explore cultural competence in greater depth throughout this training.)

Adapted from materials from CASA for Children, Inc., Portland, Oregon.

Exploring Personal Values

Exploring the meaning and place of values in your work on behalf of children can assist you in seeing the range of values that people hold and the variety of reasons people have for their beliefs. It also increases your understanding that people can hold values very different from yours and be equally thoughtful and caring in their reasoning. Even when individuals appear to have similar values, they may actually have very different perspectives and reasons for having them.

Your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer cannot be free of values. You model your own and your community's values every day through your actions (and inaction). Almost all interactions transmit values in some way—for instance, through how you dress, move, relate to others and communicate. As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you need to examine how values may affect your interactions with the children and families with whom you work. You need to acknowledge the plurality of values in your community and demonstrate respect for this diversity.

There are essentially two types of values: those that are universal and those that are not. Universal values are shared by an overwhelming majority of the community. Laws are often related to these values, but they are not the same things. The following exercise is an opportunity to explore your values and how they are similar to or different from the values of others.

Activity 1.13: Recognizing Your Values

Part 1: Complete the Values Statement Exercise handout that the facilitator distributes. Do not put your name on the sheet. This is an anonymous/confidential activity. After completing this form, give it to the facilitator, who will redistribute all the forms as part of an activity to clarify values and build empathy.

When you receive a completed Values Statement Exercise, do not identify whether you received your form or someone else's. Spend a moment noticing if the answers in front of you are similar to or different from yours.

Part 2: Around the room are posted signs representing four possible responses to the values statements: strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree. As the facilitator reads each statement, go to the sign that represents the answer on the sheet you have been given. With others in the group at your sign, think of the three most rational or respectful reasons a person might hold this belief. It may be especially difficult to come up with respectful reasons a person might hold a belief that is very different from your own, but remember that someone else in the room holds this belief. Show respect. This activity is an opportunity to walk in someone else's shoes and perhaps gain insight into why people have beliefs that differ from yours.

As a group, share your three best reasons with the large group using the following format: "I believe *[read the statement]* because *[give your three best reasons]*." After going through all 14 statements, share any remaining concerns or questions in the large group.

Participants in a Child Welfare Case

Activity 1.14: Who Participates in a Case?

Listen as the facilitator describes the roles of those involved in a court case, which are outlined below. As you listen, note in the margin any differences in your jurisdiction and use the space provided to write in information relevant to your jurisdiction. If you have questions, share them in the large group.

THE CHILD

Why is the child's case in court?

- A petition has been filed alleging abuse or neglect.

What does the child need during court intervention?

- The child needs the court to order an appropriate intervention and treatment plan so he/she can live in a safe, stable home without ongoing need for intervention from the child protection agency.
- The areas the child needs addressed include safety/protection, placement if the child is out of the home, family contact, belonging to a family, financial support, a support system, education, mental health and physical health.
- The child needs the court intervention to be focused and timely.
- The child needs services provided that will meet his/her needs.
- **Other** _____

CASA/GAL VOLUNTEER

In my area this person is called _____

What does the CASA/GAL volunteer do in the case?

- Independently investigates the child's case
- Determines the child's needs
- Explores family and community resources to meet the child's needs
- Makes recommendations to the court
- Advocates for the child
- Monitors the case
- Is the voice for what is in the child's best interest
- Is the voice for the child's expressed wishes
- **Other** _____

What does the CASA/GAL volunteer bring to the case?

- An interest in improving the life of the child through the court process
- Time, energy and focus
- Longevity (he/she often stays on the case from beginning to end)
- An “outside the system” point of view and an independent perspective
- The community’s standard for the care and protection of its children
- **Other** _____

When is the CASA/GAL volunteer involved in the case?

- **In my jurisdiction:** _____

ATTORNEY FOR THE CASA/GAL PROGRAM OR CHILD

In my jurisdiction this attorney represents [circle one]:

The child’s wishes

The child’s best interest

The CASA/GAL program

What does the attorney for the program/child do in the case?

- Represents the child’s best interest and/or wishes and protects the child’s legal rights in court
- Translates the CASA/GAL volunteer’s research and recommendations into a form that the court can effectively use to address the child’s needs (within the law, within the scope of the volunteer role, fact-based, etc.)
- Provides legal consultation to the CASA/GAL volunteer and program staff regarding the case (if the attorney represents the program rather than the child directly)
- Files legal documents relevant to the child’s case
- **Other** _____

What does the attorney for the program/child bring to the case?

- Legal expertise, facilitation and negotiation skills and courtroom experience

When is the attorney for the program/child involved in the case?

- From the petition filing through the end of the court case

PARENTS/CARETAKERS NAMED IN THE PETITION

In my area this person is called _____

Why are the parents/caretakers involved in the case?

- They have been forced into this court action because the child protection agency asked the court to intervene to protect the child from maltreatment and/or to have his/her basic needs met.
- They need to comply with the child protection agency’s intervention plan and correct the conditions that led to the child’s removal, thereby effectively protecting their child and/or enabling their child to return home.
- They need to follow the orders of the court or risk having their parental rights terminated.

What do the parents/caretakers bring to the case?

- Love for the child; family ties; history of parenting; abilities, resources and skills as parents; interactions with the child and each other; mental, emotional and physical health or illness; support system; housing and income; and their own issues/problems

ATTORNEY FOR THE PARENT/CARETAKER

What does the attorney for the parent/caretaker do in the case?

- Represents the wishes of the parent/caretaker he/she represents
- Protects the legal rights of the parent/caretaker in court
- Advises the parent/caretaker on legal matters
- Files legal documents relevant to the case
- **Other** _____

What does the attorney for the parent/caretaker bring to the case?

- Legal expertise, facilitation and negotiation skills and courtroom experience

When is the attorney for the parent/caretaker involved in the case?

- From the petition filing through the end of the court case

CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY CASEWORKER

In my area this person is called _____

What is the role of the child protection agency caseworker in the case?

- The caseworker has completed a risk assessment process and, based on risk and/or substantiated allegations of abuse and/or neglect, has determined the need for court intervention. The caseworker petitioned the court to intervene on the child's behalf because:
 - He/she has developed an intervention plan with the family, which has not resulted in eliminating the risk that child maltreatment will recur, or
 - Due to risk of imminent danger, he/she has removed the child from his/her home to ensure the child's safety.
- The caseworker needs the court to order that the agency's intervention and treatment plan be followed by the parents/caretakers and other service providers so that the need for continuous agency intervention is not required to ensure the child receives proper care and protection.
- The caseworker is responsible for managing the case and arranging for court-ordered services to be provided to the child and the child's family.
- **Other** _____

What does the child protection agency caseworker bring to the case?

- Training in analyzing risk, assessing service needs and providing guidance Direct services for families to provide them with the knowledge, skills and resources necessary for change

- Links to other service providers so that the family can access resources outside the child protective services system

When is the child protection agency caseworker involved in the case?

- From the initial contact with the family and/or child until the agency's services are no longer needed

ATTORNEY FOR THE CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY, THE COUNTY OR THE STATE

In my area this person is called _____

In my jurisdiction this attorney represents [circle one]:

The child protection agency The county The state

What does this attorney do in the case?

- Represents the position of the agency/county/state in court
- Protects the agency/county/state from liability
- Advises the agency/county/state regarding its responsibilities as outlined in the law
- Files legal documents relevant to the case
- **Other** _____

What does this attorney bring to the case?

- Legal expertise, facilitation and negotiation skills and courtroom experience

When is this attorney involved in the case?

- From the petition filing through the end of the case

INDIAN CHILD'S TRIBE

What does the Indian child's tribe do in the case?

- Represents to the court the "best interest of the child" as defined by the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- Ensures that the parents, the child and the tribe have all the rights they are afforded pursuant to ICWA
- Brings to the attention of the court culturally relevant service options and dispositional recommendations
- Protects the tribe's interest in the child and ensures the preservation of the child's ties to the tribe and its resources
- When appropriate, offers or requires that tribe take jurisdiction of the case
- Files legal documents when it is necessary
- **Other** _____

What does the tribe bring to the case?

- A very special perspective on preservation of the child's ties to the tribe
- Knowledge of relevant cultural practices and culturally relevant services that can be considered as potential resources for the child

JUDGE

What does the judge do in the case?

- Determines if there is a continued safety issue for the child that necessitates continued out-of-home placement if the child has been removed from home
- Decides if the child is abused or neglected, and if so, orders services that will address the needs of the child
- Orders appropriate reviews
- Hears testimony, motions, etc., regarding the case
- Approves the permanent plan for the child
- Orders termination of parental rights when appropriate
- Settles disputed adoption cases
- Closes the court case when there is no longer a need for court intervention or the permanent plan has been achieved
- **Other** _____

When is the judge involved in the case?

- From the request for emergency custody at the petition filing until the court case is closed (or, if the child is not removed from home, from the arraignment or adjudication hearing, depending on jurisdiction, until the court case is closed)

Activity 1.15: Asking the Right Questions

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator briefly recaps the key facts in the Bleux case. Write down questions you want to answer in order to determine what is in Deshawn Bleux's best interest. What information do you need in order to make recommendations?

Part 2: In small groups, share with each other the questions you generated. Then together make a list of questions you want to answer in order of priority. You may want to refer to the assessment handout to help with your list. What information is most important to gather first?

Activity 1.16: Guest Speaker—Case Participant

Listen as a guest speaker (or speakers) representing another role in a child abuse or neglect case talks about the value of the CASA/GAL volunteer in these cases and how you will be able to partner with them over the course of your advocacy.

Wrap Up

Fill out the Session 1 Training Evaluation and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Be sure to complete the online work for Session 2 by the deadline the facilitator specifies.