



a storyteller's  
handbook

when a child's  
future hangs in  
the balance



we are there



# we are the CASA movement.

We are ordinary people. We come from all walks of life, all across the country.

We are trained volunteers who step up to assist judges and serve the nation's most vulnerable children as court-appointed special advocates (CASA) or guardians ad litem (GAL).

We work in our own communities, but we share a common set of values.

We believe in the rights and dignity of children. We are committed to putting that belief to work for children who have been abused or neglected. And we hold ourselves to the highest standards of excellence in service.

Across the country today, we serve more than a quarter-million children. Hundreds of thousands more children need our help.

# we are there for the child.

Whatever their age, children removed from home because of abuse or neglect face a frightening, profound unknown.

We make sure they don't face it alone.

We stand by them. We are there whenever they need us, for as long as it takes to reach a safe, permanent home. We are strong, compassionate adults who are a consistent presence, who care, who listen, and who put the child's interests before all others. We give children a say in what is happening to them. We speak for them when they cannot speak for themselves.

We help them heal and thrive. We give them the support they need to become happy, successful adults.

We help them find the road home, wherever it lies.



# we are there for the judge.

To make decisions that affect the rest of a child's life, judges need to know the child. We help them do that.

We take the time to get to know the child at the heart of each case. We go where they go. We talk to the people who touch their lives—parents and foster parents, family members, teachers, doctors, neighbors, friends, social workers, attorneys, and therapists.

We gather the details only a dedicated volunteer with a caseload of one can deliver.

Every visit, call, and report we make gives judges what they need to act in the best interests of the child. Every detail helps judges move the child out of the system and into a permanent home.



# we are there to change lives.

And we do. Children who have a court-appointed volunteer receive more of the services that are critical to their well-being than children who don't. They are more likely to succeed in school.

And while their cases are among the most difficult and heartbreaking, children with court-appointed volunteers cycle through fewer foster placements and spend less time in foster care.

They reach safe, permanent homes and loving families more quickly. What's that worth to a child? To a community? To a nation? The answer in dollars is impressive: \$540 million a year in savings on foster care alone.

The answer in everything else we value as a society—health, happiness, resilience, hope, strength, human potential, faith in ourselves and in our neighbors—is beyond measure.



# we are not there alone.

Our work with children is one-on-one, but we do not work alone.

We are a movement, a group of people who have come together to advance a shared goal.

Our movement includes nearly 1,000 state organizations and local CASA and GAL programs that currently support nearly 77,000 volunteers in 49 states and the District of Columbia.

It includes the National CASA Association, which delivers state-of-the-art, rigorous training programs and tools, provides quality assurance support, and raises public awareness about the needs of the children we serve.

And it includes judges, attorneys, policymakers, donors, and friends.





A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a field of tall, golden-brown grasses. The grasses are dense and fill the entire frame, creating a textured, warm-toned background. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the natural colors of the dried vegetation.

together, we are a  
powerful voice for  
children.



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

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**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED  
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

