

Utah Office of Guardian ad Litem and CASA

CASA Agreement

The Office of Guardian ad Litem attorneys represent the best interest of minors in juvenile court child welfare proceedings and other proceedings when appointed by the court to do so. Pursuant to statute, GAL may utilize trained volunteers to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is the program used by GAL to maintain a pool of highly trained volunteers to accomplish this purpose.

Expectations of CASA's

1. Contact the child(ren) consistently or as requested by the Guardian ad Litem attorney.
2. Maintain confidentiality with respect to all communications, documents and information. Confidentiality lasts forever. No information is to be given out except by express request from the Utah Office of Guardian ad Litem and CASA.
3. Carry a copy of your CASA Volunteer assignment papers and CASA ID badge whenever working on a case.
4. Regarding any uncertainty, call the CASA Coordinator or Guardian ad Litem to clarify before proceeding any further in a case.
5. Attend volunteer in-service meetings. **Twelve hours of in-service training per year is required.**
6. CASAs must complete the state mandated Defensive Driver Course every two years.
7. Submit Court Hearing Report **two weeks prior** to Court Review.
8. Attend court proceedings on assigned cases whenever possible.
9. Maintain an activity log documenting action taken in a case and recording time spent. **Submit time spent on the case monthly to the CASA Coordinator by the 5th of every month. Include time spent with the child, travel time, time in meetings and in Court, and time spent on phone calls and emails.**
10. Once you are released from a case or the case is closed, all notes and documents in your possession are to be destroyed.
11. A CASA advocate's focus will be on the child and the CASA will refrain from sharing personal experiences involving abuse, therapy, and relationships that would be detrimental to this focus.
12. Immediately report any concerns about the child's environment to the CASA Coordinator and GAL attorney for appropriate resolution.
13. Report any knowledge of child abuse to the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Line: 1-855-323-3237. First, attempt to notify the GAL attorney that is assigned to the child, then call the reporting hotline.
14. You must immediately notify the CASA Coordinator if you are ever a suspect in a criminal or DCFS investigation. This includes notifying our office of any serious traffic violations.
15. Follow the court employee policy regarding concealed weapons which prohibits CASAs from having access to a weapon while performing their CASA duties. A concealed weapons permit does not preclude the CASA from following this policy.
16. CASA Volunteers **are** authorized to transport children only within the context of their role as a CASA Volunteer such as: transporting a child for an activity in order to meet with the child.
17. Volunteers should report to work fit for duty; able to safely and effectively perform all job functions. Taking lawfully prescribed or OTC medications responsibly, ascertaining whether the medication may interfere with safe performance of carrying out CASA duties and safe driving practices.
18. Notify the CASA Coordinator if you are unable to carry out responsibilities in a thorough, timely or professional manner or are no longer able to participate in the program.

Volunteers WILL NOT:

- Bring children to their home or introduce the child to friends/family.
- Provide direct services to youth, or provide advice, training, or direct services to the parents.
- CASAs will not supervise visitation between the CASA child client and their parents, but may observe visits with request/approval from GAL.
- Transport CASA child clients to parent visits, court hearings or appointments.
- Transport children they are not assigned to.
- Disclose any confidential information to anyone but the CASA Coordinator or the GAL. This includes personal friends, family members, foster parents, caseworkers, parties to the case, media representatives and others. Any unauthorized disclosure to anyone is a serious breach of legal and ethical responsibility.
- Copy, photograph, or remove GAL case files from the GAL office.
- Give legal advice to anyone aside from giving the suggestion to obtain legal counsel.
- Have conversations or meetings with other attorneys present without a GAL also present.
- Provide services/teach skills to parents.
- Promise children, foster parents, natural parents or others anything. The best we can do is make recommendations to the GAL, the Judge makes the final decision.

Volunteers may be terminated by the CASA Coordinator for: Breach of confidentiality; Citation for contempt of court; Ex parte communications with the Court; Fabrication of reports – written or verbal; Giving legal advice; Acting as a spokesperson for CASA, the Juvenile Court, any state agency, or the Office of Guardian ad Litem; Any other reason that the CASA Coordinator feels are grounds for termination, such as failure to perform required CASA duties. Conflicts of interest that are unable to be resolved, are to be taken to the Director of the Office of Guardian ad Litem and CASA.

I agree and understand that:

- The CASA program is designated to serve the Court. The Judge appoints a Guardian ad Litem attorney to a specific case and expects certain duties to be performed as part of that appointment. The Guardian ad Litem attorney calls upon a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), screened and trained by that office, to carry out specific duties which cannot be accomplished by the attorney alone. The Court has the ability to dismiss a CASA volunteer from a case for failure to perform duties in a timely manner, breach of confidentiality or violation of Court order.
- The working relationship between the CASA program and the State's Department of Human Services must be one of mutual respect if it is to be successful. Even if there is a disagreement about the recommendations or plans for a particular child, respect should be maintained for each person's role and position. The caseworker's job is different from the CASA volunteers'; the tools and techniques used to do their jobs will also differ.

It is expected that you will adhere to, and be familiar with, the above duties and responsibilities. If any of the prohibited activities are engaged in, the Guardian ad Litem attorney and the Administrative Office of the Courts assume no responsibility or liability and you will be responsible for your own actions.

SIGNATURE: First Middle Last

DATE