

## CASA Terms

**CASA** – Court Appointed Special Advocate.

**CHINS** – Child in Need of Services. Children are removed from the home. Either in foster care or relative placement.

**CPS** – Child Protection Services.

**DCS** – Department of Child Services.

**FCM** – Family Case Manager.

**Foster Care** – Out of home placement. Either with a licensed foster family or a facility.

**Foster Care Specialist**- This is a DCS employee who assists people in becoming foster parents and supports them while they are foster parents. Concerns that foster parents have throughout the life of a case should be directed to either the Foster Care Specialist or the FCM on the case. In our region, the Foster Care Specialists are located in the Jasper DCS office.

**GAL** – Guardian Ad Litem. In our county, these are attorneys who are paid to perform about the same role as a CASA. They are mainly used in Divorce Cases where CASAs are not appointed. In other counties, a GAL can be a volunteer who is not an attorney. They are exactly the same as a CASA; they just use a different name.

**Guardianship** – When a Guardianship is granted, the parents' rights are not terminated. The person(s) accepting Guardianship has legal responsibility for the child. The Guardianship is granted by a judge remains in effect until a court approves its dismissal.

**IA** – Informal Adjustment. This is one step down from a CHINS. DCS will put an IA in place when the family needs help but the situation does warrant a CHINS filing. This process allows the family to stay intact while receiving the help they need. When an IA is not successful, the DCS files a CHINS Petition. Not all cases have an IA prior to a CHINS filing. The Judge is aware of all IAs but hearings are not held and CASAs are not appointed.

**In-Home CHINS** – A CHINS Petition is filed, the children become wards of the state but they remain in the home. CASAs are appointed.

**LEA** – Law Enforcement Agency

**LOD** – Local Office Director (DCS)

**MSL** – Minimum Sufficient Level of Care.

**Monitored Visit** – After supervised visits are successful, the case progresses to monitored visits. This is when the visitation supervisor will drop in to check on everyone during the visit rather than stay and observe the entire time. After monitored visits are successful, the visits become unsupervised.

**Relative Placement** – When removing a child from a home the first choice to place a child is with a relative if possible. This relative may or may not live in Dubois County. They become the caregivers for the child while the case is open.

**Relative Placement Specialist** – A DCS employee who is able to assist relatives who have the responsibility of caring for a child in the system. When relatives have a need or a question, they should contact this person or the FCM assigned to their case. They have the knowledge and authority to help.

**TANF** – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Relative Placements are encouraged to file for this to help with the expense of having children placed with them.

**TPR**- Termination of Parental Rights

**Trial Home Visit** – The children are placed in the home with the parents 24/7. This is the final step before dismissing a case. DCS and the CASA advocate are still in place and make visits while the case remains open an additional three months.