



CASA stands for **C**ourt **A**ppointed **S**pecial **A**dvocate. Each CASA is a community volunteer who has been trained to represent the best interests of children in the court system. Every CASA has had background checks prior to being appointed to any case. By state law a CASA or Guardian Ad Litem must be appointed to every child in a CHINS case.

CASAs look out for the best interests of the children in every case; not the best interests of either parent or anyone else.

Usually the same CASA is appointed to represent an entire sibling group, even if the children are in different placements.

In addition to speaking with the children and parents in a case, CASAs will speak with other individuals who are involved. Possibilities are: other family members, the DCS Case Worker, Teachers, Doctors & Parent Aids to name a few.

CASAs are required to keep everything in a case confidential.

CASAs write a report to the Judge prior to each review hearing. Parents' attorneys receive a copy of this report. In the report, the CASA will tell the Judge what has happened in the case since the last hearing. They will also make recommendations based on what they believe is in the best interest of the child(ren). The recommendations may or may not agree with the DCS recommendations. It is always up to the Judge to determine what will happen next in a case.

CASAs are required to visit the children they serve at least once a month. In order to get to know the children better, the CASA may visit more often. When age appropriate, the CASA may phone the child in addition to face to face visits. CASAs make both announced and unannounced visits with the children, no matter where they are placed.

It is important for the CASA to speak to the child or children they represent alone no matter where the child is placed. A CASA is allowed to take children out of the placement home for an outing. For example: The CASA may take a child to the park or to get ice cream or lunch.

CASAs do not provide services such as rides to visits or therapy or supervise visits.

A CASA's role is to gather information, not give it. They will ask a lot of questions but will not be able to answer most of yours. We know this can be frustrating. You can call the CASA to give information when appropriate, but when you need information, you will need to contact your Attorney or Family Case Manager at DCS.