Hall-Dawson Court Appointed Special Advocate

Role Description

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (**CASA**) Volunteer is assigned to a child/children involved in a dependency case. The volunteer speaks up for the child’s best interests. A CASA continues on the case after the judicial proceeding in order to ensure permanency in the child’s life. The Volunteer conducts an independent fact-gathering mission to provide the judicial system with enough information to make a permanency plan for each child involved.

***The CASA’s only role is to speak for the child!***

***Responsibilities:***

* To assure the child’s best interests do not get overlooked while in protective custody and that the child is placed in a safe, nurturing, permanent home as quickly as possible;
* To gather information in order to establish the facts and circumstances of the child’s situation;
* To seek cooperative solutions with DFCS caseworkers, parents, relatives and other agencies in order to serve the child’s best interests and to determine resources available that can possibly meet the child’s needs;
* To pursue a safe, permanent placement for the child;
* To maintain **strict confidentiality** with all information related to a child or their families;
* To provide written reports of findings and recommendations to CASA staff prior to court hearings or citizen panel reviews;
* To attend court hearings and citizen panel reviews to represent the child’s best interests;
* To communicate regularly with CASA staff about the case and advocacy steps taken to ensure the best interests of the child are represented in court;
* To maintain genuine care and concern for the best interests of the child;
* To successfully complete the requirements of the CASA training program and screening process.
* Volunteers **cannot transport clients** under any circumstances.

***Qualifications:***

* Successful completion of the 40 hour training program and its requirements;
* To undergo a criminal background investigation including fingerprinting;
* To complete a personal interview with the training coordinator;
* To commit at least one year to the CASA program and to take at least one case;
* To maintain 10 hours of in-service training each year;
* To have the desire & the heart to advocate for the best interests of abused & neglected children;
* To be 21 years of age or older.