



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**CASA OF THE
2ND JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

**COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES
VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**

I. VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Court Appointed Special Advocates

Supervisor: CASA Advocate Coordinator

MISSION OF AGENCY

The mission of CASA of the 2nd Judicial District is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are involved in the juvenile courts. The National CASA Association works with state and local CASA and volunteer guardian ad litem programs to promote and support quality volunteer advocacy to help assure each child a safe, permanent and nurturing home.

QUALIFICATIONS

- ◆ Minimum 21 years of age
- ◆ Complete screening requirements (application, personal interview, three completed reference checks, central registry and criminal background investigation)
- ◆ Complete 30 hours of training.

If a volunteer refuses to sign a release for a criminal check, that applicant will be automatically rejected. Candidates will be rejected if convicted of or pending a felony charge(s) or misdemeanor(s) involving a sex offense, abuse and neglect or related acts that may pose risk to a child.

If a volunteer has not lived in Arkansas for at least five (5) years, a national background check must be conducted. Every two years, all volunteers, staff and board members must submit to an updated background check.

TRAINING

A CASA volunteer completes a minimum of 30 hours of initial training, which includes policies and procedures of the CASA program, Department of Human Services, and Juvenile Court; dynamics and human behavior associated with child abuse and neglect; relevant local, state and federal laws; permanency planning and family preservation; cultural diversity; communication and interviewing skills; and roles and responsibilities of a CASA volunteer. As part of their training, a CASA volunteer also observes several hours of court proceedings.

A CASA volunteer completes a minimum of 12 hours of in-service training each year.

TIME COMMITMENT

Upon case acceptance, a CASA volunteer commits to the case for at least 18 months, preferably until a permanent placement is found for all the children.

SUPERVISOR

A CASA volunteer will be assigned to an Advocate Coordinator for each case.

II. TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Volunteers may not transport adjudicated children or family members under any circumstances.

If a child or family member needs transportation, the volunteer may help make arrangements through the child's case worker.

III. TRAVEL

CASA of the 2nd Judicial District reimburses mileage for volunteers if the travel is outside the five-county district at the state-approved rate. Mileage must be submitted to the Executive Director on approved

mileage sheets. Volunteers 55 and older are encouraged to sign up with Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in their community. RSVP may reimburse for limited mileage related to volunteer work.

IV. TIME

An accurate record of the time each advocate spends on their case is necessary. CASA's funding relies on accurately reporting the time advocates spend working their case. Advocates record time easily online.

V. VOLUNTEER TRAINING POLICY

Following Arkansas CASA standards, thirty hours of pre-service training will be provided for all volunteers. Training will cover the specific needs of abused children; current laws relating to child abuse; children's protective services agencies; CASA and attorneys ad litem; CASA volunteer roles and responsibilities; confidentiality; child development; communication and information gathering; court process; advocacy; and cultural awareness.

Additionally, twelve (12) in-service hours are required annually for each active volunteer. Several opportunities will be offered throughout the year. Credit for in-service trainings provided by CASA of the 2nd Judicial District will be given to those in attendance. To assist advocates in meeting this requirement, books and videos may be checked out of the CASA library or your advocate coordinator can assist you with online selections to meet this requirement. For book, video or online education credit a brief summary must be written and submitted to your Advocate Coordinator. Credit for education not provided directly thru CASA must be approved by staff.

VI. DRESS CODE

Court: Attire for court should be professional business dress. Volunteers must present a professional image by wearing appropriate business attire and maintaining good grooming habits. Volunteers should refrain from wearing excess jewelry, perfumes, colognes, make-up, extreme hairstyles, jeans or faddish revealing clothing.

Case Staffings and other CASA related meetings: Dress business casual. You are not expected to wear a suit, dress, or tie. Business casual is considered tailored and appropriate, excluding jeans, sneakers, tight clothing and athletic wear.

Visits with Children: Dress weekend casual, appropriate to the activity.

VII. CASA DO'S AND DON'TS/GUIDELINES

DO:

- Report any suspicion that a child has been mistreated. You are not to judge whether the child is in danger; leave that to the investigator. The number to call to report child abuse or neglect is 1-800-482-5964. Immediately inform the CASA office that you have made a report.
- Meet all parties involved with your case in person. It will make it 100% easier to work your case. Be a friendly volunteer, even when you're being assertive. *Remember: other volunteers may have different cases involving the same professionals.*
- Caseworkers make the basic decisions on the case. Other professionals also have clear responsibilities. Their performance or judgment should not be discussed with parties to the case. Never challenge decisions of any professionals in front of any family members or make suggestions to the family which you have not discussed with the case worker.

- If you disagree with any professional on the case, discuss your areas of disagreement directly with that person first. If you do not feel satisfied with that discussion, immediately contact a member of the CASA staff.
- Call your Advocate Coordinator whenever you are:
 - a. Unsure of how to proceed.
 - b. Confused about any issue or procedure.
 - c. Need to know the resources or options available.
 - d. Need assistance or consultation on any matter.
 - e. Need to vent.
 - f. Unsure of a conflict of interest.
- Ask a staff member to accompany or assist you at any time during the case.
- Give the CASA office number as your contact number to the families you are working with.
- Always submit a court report, 10 business days before every hearing.
- Attend all court hearings and DHS staffings. If unable to attend the staffing, please contact your Advocate Coordinator so they can attend.
- Update changes to personal information in Optima, including an emergency number.

DON'T:

- Never take a foster child into your custody. This is against the law. Do not take a foster child home with you. It is not appropriate for children or family members involved in juvenile cases to visit in your home.
- **Never** transport a child or family member involved in a juvenile case under any circumstances. If transportation is needed, contact the child's caseworker. Let the caseworker make the appropriate arrangements.
- Don't give expensive gifts. Cards and/or small tokens are okay.
- Don't make promises-you may not be able to keep them. Don't even make suggestions such as "I'll see what I can do." A needy or desperate child can easily misinterpret your intent.
- Don't give legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
- Don't let the parent become too dependent on CASA, because when you are no longer there, what have they learned to do for themselves? You may show them resources, but do not make appointments for them.
- Don't do anything you are uncomfortable with. Call your Advocate Coordinator to discuss situations before rather than after.
- Don't give medicine, aspirin, vitamins, etc.
- Don't authorize medical treatment for a child. Any hospital or doctor visits must be arranged so that the person with custody is present ie: DHS.
- Don't give treats or even feed children without checking on any dietary restrictions with their primary care-giver.
- Don't misuse credentials. Use your court orders and CASA ID only for accessing information about your case.
- Don't carry or use any weapons while working a CASA case.

- Don't surprise CASA! Surprises create chaos in a CASA program. Problems of a personal nature will be held in strictest confidence. Call your Advocate Coordinator if you are:
 - a. Going on vacation.
 - b. Having surgery.
 - c. Getting married or divorced.
 - d. Losing your job or getting a new job.
 - e. Having family problems.
 - f. Involved in any situation that may affect your ability to do your job as a CASA. Please do not let your children down!

CASA Guidelines for Contact with Children

1. Visits and/or contact with children should occur twice per month while assigned to a case. This does not change based on placement. Visit children when they are in Foster Care, living with relatives or parents, regardless of the age of the child.
2. **NEVER** take children home with you.
3. Ask if the children have questions and answer the questions honestly with facts.
 - a. Do not probe or introduce the specifics of abuse. Be especially careful when discussing issues in sexual abuse and other potential criminal cases.
 - b. Explain your role as a CASA volunteer in words children can understand. Communicate in a manner appropriate for their age and developmental level.
 - c. Explain confidentiality. Tell children that you may be asked to tell what they tell you. If they are adolescents, tell them exactly what information you will share.
4. Visit the child prior to any hearing that the child will be attending. Explain what is expected to occur and explore the child's current reactions and feelings regarding the upcoming hearing.
5. Reflect children's feelings without evaluating them and let them know it is okay to have unpleasant or negative feelings.
6. Respect children's attachments to their parents. Remain neutral and non-judgmental about their parents. Do not express your opinion of the parents even if asked.
7. Treat children with respect. Don't talk down to them or criticize them.
8. Don't make promises – period!
9. Tell children that what happened is not their fault. With older children who have been in therapeutic treatment and/or state care, confirm the need to accept past problems and assume responsibility for their future.
10. Prior to conferring with children you will advocate for, confer with the treatment team (therapist, house parents, shelter or foster parents, social workers, case managers) regarding concerns children express to you and other case matters.
11. Know that your case will have a beginning, middle and an end. Plan on being in the child's life for only a limited time.

CASA Guidelines for Contact with Parents and Family Members

1. Explain your role as a Court Appointed Special Advocate clearly to the parents and family members. Tell them you have been appointed by the court and you are a volunteer. Do your best to develop good working relationships.
2. Focus on obtaining information. Find the strengths of the parents and family members. Find the needs of the family. Strive to be non-judgmental.
3. Explain confidentiality; you will gather information about the case, then report facts and make recommendations to the court. When meeting with the family for the first time, ask them if they have received a copy of the green booklet entitled, "*A Booklet for Parents, Guardians, and Custodians in*

Child Abuse and Neglect Cases". If not, direct them to ask their attorney for one during the next hearing.

4. Listen with respect.
5. Respond to questions. When you do not know an answer, say you do not. If the question is about their legal action, encourage them to contact their attorney. If the question is about services, encourage them to proactively contact their social worker. Confer with your Advocate Coordinator to assist you if you are uncertain about the answer to a question.
6. Let the parents and family members know you are aware of the stress caused by court intervention.
7. Avoid asking leading questions and making emotional remarks.
8. Use reinforcement such as "I see" or a nod of your head to encourage responsiveness.
9. Begin with general, open-ended questions such as "Tell me about..." Use closed questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no" or a short answer when you need specific information or when you are not receiving responses to more general questions.
10. Strive to understand your attitudes and behaviors and those of the parents, family members and foster parents. Refer to Chapter 3 in the Volunteer Training Manual.
11. Be clear about what is to occur next. Consult your Advocate Coordinator for help with planning or assistance with any questions you may have.
12. After contact with parents or family members, carefully document the facts you obtained and your observations, actions, questions and plans. Use objective statements that describe a specific fact or behavior. Do not make interpretations, diagnostic conclusions or judgments.
13. Input your notes and upload documents related to your case into Optima in a timely manner.

CASA Guidelines for Working with Social Services, the Attorney ad Litem and other Collaborative Partners

1. When first contacting an agency, introduce yourself as the Court Appointed Special Advocate. If they are unfamiliar with the CASA program, explain the role of the CASA. If seeking information, provide a copy of the Court Order. Ask for their preferred method of communication.
2. Receive all records in person or have them sent to the CASA office. To access records on anyone other than those listed on your court order, contact your supervisor about obtaining a court order or the release of information form.
3. Document all contacts and conversations by entering into Optima the date, type of contact, agency and individual names. Enter factorial highlights of conversations and observations.
4. Maintain confidentiality. With contacts other than social services, limit information provided to only the information necessary to state your request.
5. Consider the needs and schedule of the other party. Be brief. State the reason you are contacting them. Provide details only if necessary. Present most important information first.
6. Arrange visits in advance.
7. Watch for opportunities to express appreciation and praise and do so. Specify what was done or said, how it contributed, and why you appreciate it.
8. Practice good listening skills. Affirm that you have heard what was said. Summarize or paraphrase significant statements then ask if you understood correctly. If strong emotions are expressed, affirm your awareness of the feelings of the speaker. Confer with program staff if problem is unresolved. Avoid escalating conflicts.
9. Be certain that the information you share with and receive from service providers is known by the assigned case worker and the Attorney ad Litem. Provide any significant new information as soon as possible.
10. Contact service provider(s) to find out about the availability of needed services. If referral seems appropriate, contact case worker and request that a referral be made.
11. Contact the assigned case worker and your supervisor when concerns exist about a child's placement.

12. When appropriate, confer regarding each contact's perception of case needs. Ask if there are specific ways you could help with case activities.
13. Remember that patience is a virtue and persistence—appropriately expressed—is also a virtue.

CASA Guidelines for Contact with Foster Parents

1. Explain your role as a CASA clearly to foster parents. Tell them you have been appointed by the court and you are a volunteer. Explain confidentiality, and tell them that you will gather information about the case and then report facts and make recommendations to the court. Do your best to develop good working relationships.
2. Focus on obtaining information.
3. Do not share case information with foster parents.
4. Listen with respect.
5. Respond to questions. When you do not know an answer, say you do not. If you are not entitled to disclose the information they are seeking, tell them so. If you are unsure, ask your Advocate Coordinator.
6. Encourage the foster parents to stay in contact with the caseworker assigned to the children in their home. You may also encourage the foster parents to be in court.
7. Consult your supervisor for help in planning your work as a CASA volunteer or assistance with any questions you may have.
8. Carefully document in Optima the facts you obtained, and your observations, actions, questions and plans. Use objective statements that describe a specific fact or behavior. Do not make interpretations, diagnostic conclusions or judgments.
9. Input notes and upload documents related to your case to Optima in a timely manner.
10. Do not include names or addresses of foster parents in court reports.

VII. VOLUNTEER ETHICS

CASA volunteers must abide by minimum standards in order to maintain this program's competence and integrity.

Premise:

A CASA volunteer must not become inappropriately involved in a case by engaging in activities which jeopardize the safety of the child, the integrity of the program, or the objectivity of the volunteer or activities which are likely to result in conflict of interest or expose the program or the volunteer to criminal or civil liability. The CASA volunteer shall not be related to any party in the case or be employed in a position that might create a conflict of interest.

Conduct:

Propriety - CASA's should maintain high standards of personal conduct in their capacity as an agent of the court.

Competence - CASA's should become and remain proficient in the performance of their duties.

Integrity - CASA's should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.

Ethical Responsibility:

Confidentiality—The CASA must maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of others in all matters relating to case assignments.

Respect, Fairness, Courtesy—The CASA should treat all parties to the case with respect, fairness, courtesy, and good faith.

Use of Authority—The CASA should make appropriate use of authority in his/her appointments, limiting the role of CASA to fulfilling responsibilities within the particular case.

Development of Knowledge—The CASA should take responsibility for identifying and developing knowledge and fully utilizing information for performance of the CASA role, not for sharing unnecessarily.

Program Integrity—The CASA should not represent his/her personal views or opinions as those of the program nor should the CASA refer to or use his/her participation in the program to advance his/her personal views in any proceedings unrelated to the case in which he/she was appointed.

IX. MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE TO A CASE

CASA Volunteer will:

1. Read the child's case file at DHS.
2. Communicate with the caseworker, in a timely manner upon appointment and a minimum of one time per month after.
3. Meet the children in a timely manner after appointment and visit at least twice per month.
4. Other contact with children (ie. telephone, text) as applicable for the child's age and interests.
5. Meet the child's primary caregiver in a timely manner after placement occurs, and either in person or by telephone one time per month.
6. Maintain contact with the child's therapist and teachers if applicable.
7. Maintain contact with the child's family members if applicable.
8. Maintain contact with the child's Attorney ad Litem.
9. Maintain contact with your advocate coordinator twice each month, assuring accurate, up to date records and contact logs for your cases and time sheets.
10. Attend all DHS Staffings regarding your case.
11. Attend all court hearings and be available to testify about your case.
12. Provide written reports for all hearings 10 business days prior to the court hearing.
13. Advocate for permanency for the child(ren) whether that means returning to the home of a family member; adoption; or finding a long term stable placement.
14. Maintain confidentiality of all issues and records of the case.

X. CONFIDENTIALITY

CASA Program Policies on Confidentiality must be strictly followed:

If in doubt what to tell someone, call the CASA office before you release any information.

1. In interviews with parents, children, foster parents, therapists, teachers, and other professionals pertaining to the case, the CASA may collect information, but is prohibited from giving information to the person(s) being interviewed. There should always be a free exchange of information with the case worker, Office of Chief Council, Attorney ad Litem or CASA staff.
2. If asked to give a presentation, please consult with staff what you are allowed to discuss. CASA shall not reveal any identifying information such as names and addresses. The identities of families involved with Juvenile Court are strictly protected by law.
3. Remember: You are not a privileged information professional. Anything you may be told, you may have to report to the court. Tell your CASA child and family in advance, at the onset of establishing your relationship with them that anything they tell you, you may have to report to the court. This can prevent many problems down the road.
4. Never make statements to the press about your case or the CASA Program until you have checked with CASA staff. If contacted by the press, you should immediately refer them to CASA staff. You

may confirm that you are a CASA, but do not confirm or deny that you are the CASA on any named case

5. Mark any records pertaining to your CASA case "CONFIDENTIAL." Keep them in a drawer or private place at home where family members will not have access to them.
6. Never take personal notes to court.

Remember: a breach of confidentiality is serious and can result in your dismissal from the CASA program.

**XI. PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY
CASA VOLUNTEER**

I promise that I shall hold in confidence all pertinent information relating to cases and CASA program procedures. I will not violate the confidential relationships between CASA, its volunteers, related agencies, courts and any and all parties of any case. I will not remove any written records from the office of CASA without the expressed permission of my Advocate Coordinator.

I agree to return all information that I have gathered, together with any printed matter of notations relevant to any and all cases to which I have been assigned, at the close of a case or if my service to CASA comes to an end.

I accept full responsibility for maintaining the confidential and private nature of all records and information. I understand that I am personally responsible and liable for any violation of this agreement.

Executive Director

Date

Advocate Coordinator

Date

Volunteer Printed Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

**XII. CASA COMMITMENT
COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE**

Upon signing this statement I, _____, make a commitment to CASA of the 2nd Judicial District, and to the children whom I will serve as a CASA volunteer. I will:

1. Serve on a case from the time of court assignment to the implementation of a permanent plan for the children involved in the case: a period of at least eighteen (18) months.
2. Devote as much time is necessary to provide the Court with the information needed to make an informed placement decision for the child and to ensure that the child receives adequate representation as to his or her best interest.
3. Maintain strict confidentiality. To maintain confidentiality means that the CASA volunteer:
 - a. Does not discuss the case with their spouse (unless cleared in writing by the CASA office), relatives, children or friends.
 - b. May only discuss the case with a CASA Advocate Coordinator, another CASA volunteer, or persons who are a party to the case.
4. Uphold CASA of the 2nd Judicial District's transportation policy.
5. It is not permissible for the CASA volunteer to invite and/or receive children or parents of cases they are assigned to into his/her home.
6. Obtain twelve hours of CASA on-going education per year because this will:
 - c. Improve my ability to deal with abused children and their families.
 - d. Increase my knowledge about family violence, child abuse, and other related topics.
 - e. Meet State and National CASA requirements to remain a CASA volunteer.
7. Contact my supervisor by phone bi-monthly to inform him/her of my children's status and to review my casework goals.
8. Record all case activity online in a timely manner.
9. Complete court reports on time, ten (10) business days prior to each hearing.
10. Attend all court hearings, DHS staffings and other meetings regarding the child's future.
11. Dress in an appropriate manner while representing CASA of the 2nd Judicial District.
12. Notify my Advocate Coordinator immediately if I cannot perform any of the above commitments.
13. Report any changes in placement, contact information for parties, etc., immediately to the CASA office so that the file can be updated.

CASA of the 2nd Judicial District makes the commitment to:

1. Provide ongoing training, supervision, and help in evaluating each volunteers work.
2. Provide the professional consultation and necessary support in order to promote appropriate interventions into the child's situation and to facilitate appropriate recommendations about his or her placement.

This agreement is entered into for the purpose of providing the best possible advocacy for the children with whom I will work. I fully understand the failure to complete or comply with any of the above requirements may result in my termination as a volunteer with CASA of the 2nd Judicial District.

Volunteer Printed Name

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Date

XIII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Purpose:

This procedure is implemented to mediate grievances a CASA volunteer has while actively working a CASA case. CASA volunteers are encouraged to air any grievance that arises through the established procedures set forth herein. Use of the grievance procedure will not affect the volunteer's present or future position as a CASA.

Definition:

A grievance is any difference between a CASA volunteer and a staff employee regarding CASA case management. Grievances must be initiated within ten working days of the occurrence of the facts on which the grievance is based. Failure to do so, or failure to carry the grievance to succeeding steps within the limits specified, constitutes a waiver of the grievance.

A volunteer adversely affected by a policy or practice may appeal such application or interpretation. The appeals process must be initiated by the employee/volunteer within seven days of the event, which serves as the basis of the appeal.

- The Grievance process is initiated by the volunteer requesting, in writing, a meeting to discuss the matter with the volunteer's Advocate Coordinator.
- If the problem has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the volunteer, they may appeal to the Executive Director.
- If the problem remains unresolved following conference with the Executive Director, the volunteer may appeal to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.
- The Executive Committee may rule on the appeal. The ruling of the Executive Committee may be appealed to the Board of Directors.
- The volunteer may withdraw the grievance at any time.
- At each stage of the grievance procedure, the written summary of the proceedings shall be prepared and the volunteer shall be given a copy for review and comments. The written summary and volunteer comments will be placed in the volunteer's permanent personal file.

XIV. ACCESS TO VOLUNTEER RECORDS

The CASA program maintains a written record for each volunteer in a locked file cabinet accessible only to staff. This volunteer record contains the following: identifying information and emergency contacts, volunteer application, job description, reference documentation, criminal check documentation, training records and signed policies and procedures.

XV. TERMINATION POLICY

Policies and procedures for the discharge or termination of a CASA volunteer.

Corrective Action

Corrective action may be taken if the volunteer's work is unsatisfactory. Corrective action is within the discretion of the Advocate Coordinator or the Executive Director and may include:

1. Additional supervision
2. Reassignment
3. Retraining
4. Referral to another volunteer position
5. Separation from the Program

Separation from Program

Separation may occur at the discretion of the Executive Director. Appropriate grounds include:

1. The Volunteer being charged with a crime against a child or any gross neglect or misconduct
2. Breach of confidentiality
3. The Volunteer takes action without program or court approval which endangers the child or is outside the capacity or power of the CASA Program
4. The Volunteer violates a Program policy, court order or law
5. The Volunteer demonstrates inability to effectively carry out CASA volunteer duties
6. The Volunteer fails to complete required ongoing training
7. The Volunteer falsifies volunteer applications or misrepresents fact during the screening process
8. The Volunteer becomes inappropriately or overly involved with the child or family
9. The Volunteer fails to satisfactorily complete initial training
10. The Volunteer's references are not consistent with application or screening process
11. Violation of the program's nondiscrimination and/or sexual harassment policy
12. Soliciting or accepting gratuities
13. Neglect of duty or incompetence
14. Failure to contact child twice monthly without a legitimate reason
15. No contact with CASA staff for two months including no reports or input of data into case file, no replies to letter / email and/or returning phone calls from CASA staff
16. When the child's best interests are not being served
17. Repeated failure to submit Reports to the Court or input information online

Dismissal from a Case

A volunteer may be dismissed from a case for the following reasons:

1. At the request of the volunteer
2. At the request of the Juvenile Judge
3. For failure to make court appearances
4. For failure to provide court reports and/or turn them in on time
5. For insubordination or refusal to follow an order from your Advocate Coordinator or Executive Director
6. For failure to act in a professional manner as deemed by the Advocate Coordinator or Executive Director

Should the actions of a volunteer result in either dismissal from the case or the CASA program, the volunteer has the rights noted herein to grievance procedures.

At the time of a volunteer dismissal, all files, notes, and any other materials associated with the CASA case will be returned to the CASA Advocate Coordinator within five (5) business days of the dismissal.

Resignation

While CASA volunteers make a commitment to continue with a case until it is terminated, there may be circumstances that require a CASA volunteer to resign.

- Resignations must be made in writing so that the CASA office can notify all parties involved and assign another CASA volunteer if necessary
- It is requested that volunteers provide advance notice if at all possible and state a reason for their departure
- The Volunteer will return all case materials, notes and name badge.

XVI. GENERAL POLICIES

Ultimate responsibility for all CASA cases rests with the Executive Director. As a volunteer, you represent CASA and what you do reflects on the organization. Always conduct yourself in a professional way that reflects favorably on CASA and comply with CASA policies and procedures.

Open Door: CASA has an “open door” policy. If you have any problems or questions regarding your case or concerning the policies outlined in this manual, you are encouraged to follow the chain of command: Advocate Coordinator followed by the Executive Director.

Agency Letterhead: Volunteers act as official representatives of CASA and may use CASA letterhead in normal advocacy situations. Use of letterhead is not permissible for personal correspondence relating to CASA (i.e. letters to the editor expressing personal opinions, etc.).

Media Communication: Volunteers are not permitted to make statements involving CASA to the communication media without the written consent of the Executive Director. Any inquiries concerning CASA, its policies, practices or clients, should be referred to the Executive Director. CASA volunteers may be asked by the Executive Director to represent CASA at speaking engagements.

Conference/Workshop Attendance: Workshops or conferences will be offered to Volunteers as opportunities arise and funding is available.

Direct Service Provision: CASA is not a “direct service” provider. CASA is a facilitator and may advocate for direct service providers to provide appropriate services to clients.

Personal Involvement with Children and Families: A CASA volunteer’s effectiveness and standing in court depends on volunteers maintaining professional relationships with children and families. Volunteers are not permitted to become over-involved with CASA children and families. Inappropriate personal involvement with a CASA client can be grounds for dismissal.

**CASA OF THE 2nd JUDICIAL DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**

I have received a copy of the Volunteer Policies & Procedures Handbook containing the CASA job description; policies and procedures; CASA Don’ts; guidelines for contact with children, parents, family members, and foster parents; guidelines for working with the Attorney ad Litem, DCFS and other service providers; and guidelines for working with team leaders.

I understand and agree to these policies.

Volunteer Printed Name

Signature of Volunteer

Date