



CASA For Kids of Kenton & Campbell County, Inc.
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VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CASA For Kids of Kenton & Campbell County, Inc.

**COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE
VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION**

OBJECTIVE: To advocate for the best interest of a child who is before the court as a result of abuse, neglect or dependency.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To adhere to CASA's overall policies and procedures.
2. To complete all required training.
3. To maintain confidentiality at all times.
4. To review the child's and the families social service case file.
5. To gather information from the child and all parties involved with the child
6. To record the findings/contact of all interviews.
7. To attend all planning conferences held by the social service agency in the interest of the child.
8. To write a report to the Court regarding the findings of the investigation and recommendations regarding the child's case.
9. To attend all court proceedings in the interest of the child.
10. To maintain on-going contact with the child and other parties involved with the child throughout assignment to the case.
11. To monitor the decision made by the court or permanency plan made by the social service agency to ensure that it is implemented in a timely fashion.
12. To arrange with the CASA Director or Volunteer Coordinator for coverage of planning conferences or court proceedings if unable to attend.
13. To report, in accordance with KRS 620.030, any incident of suspected child abuse/neglect immediately to the assigned social worker or proper authorities if the worker is not available. Also, immediately report the incident or suspicion to the CASA Director or Volunteer Coordinator.
14. To report on the status of the case once a month in writing to update the CASA Director or the Volunteer Coordinator of any important developments as they occur.
15. To return to the CASA office upon completion and closure of the case, all notes, reports and any other confidential information received as a CASA volunteer.

REQUIREMENTS:

In accordance with KRS 620.515

1. A CASA volunteer shall meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Be at least twenty-one (21) years of age;
 - (b) Be of good moral character;
 - (c) Complete a written application providing names of at least three (3) references
 - (d) Submit to a personal interview with program staff

- (e) Submit to criminal records check
 - (f) Submit to a check of the child abuse and adult protection registry maintained by the cabinet.
2. If found acceptable, the applicant shall receive a minimum of fifteen (30) hours of initial training and take an oath of confidentiality as administered by the Family Court Judge.

TRAINING:

A 30 hour pre-service training program must be completed prior to beginning work as a CASA. Training includes information regarding: the court system, the social service system, child abuse, domestic violence, and substance abuse. An additional 12 hours of in-service training is required every year. Attendance at monthly in-service training is strongly encouraged.

SUPERVISION:

The Director and Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for the supervision and evaluations of volunteers.

**PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES FOR
CASA VOLUNTEERS**

1. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT take a child assigned to the agency to his or her home.
2. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT interact with any child assigned to the agency in areas that cannot be readily observed by others.
3. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT have excessive or inappropriate contact with the child.
4. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT give legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
5. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT make placement arrangements for the child.
6. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT give money or expensive gifts to the child or family. It is recommended that no gifts be given; however, if a gift is given it should be a value of \$5 or under.
7. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT supervise visitation.
8. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT carry a weapon, even with the proper permit, while performing the duties of a CASA volunteer.
9. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT transport any child assigned to the agency.
10. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT breach confidentiality.
11. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT take family members or friends on CASA visits.
12. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT be related to any parties involved in the case or know any party well enough to call the CASA volunteer's impartiality into question.
13. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT be employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest.

14. CASA volunteers SHALL NOT have any direct or indirect financial interest in assets, leases, business transactions, or professional services of the CASA program.

**CASA For Kids
CONCEALED WEAPONS POLICY**

CASA volunteers are prohibited from carrying a concealed deadly weapon, even with the proper permit, while performing duties of a CASA volunteer. This policy is in accordance with the Kenton County ordinance that prohibits the possession of concealed deadly weapons, even with proper permit, in any building owned, leased, or controlled by the County.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The CASA volunteer's court report is not to be substantially altered by the Volunteer Coordinator or the Director without knowledge and agreement of the CASA volunteer. The CASA Director shall settle any conflict arising between a CASA volunteer and the program supervisor regarding the handling of a case, the reporting of information or recommendations to be included in the court report.

**CASA/GAL Program
Volunteer Corrective Action and Dismissal Policy**

Corrective Action

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

1. Additional supervision
2. Reassignment
3. Retraining with possible suspension
4. Referral to another volunteer position
5. Dismissal from the CASA/GAL program

Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the program or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignments are subject to dismissal. Dismissal is within the discretion of the program director.

Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Violation of program policies and procedures, court rules or law
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing volunteer duties
- Theft of property or misuse of program equipment or materials
- Mistreatment or inappropriate conduct toward clients, families, co-workers or Cooperating agency personnel
- Taking action without program or court approval that endangers the child or is Outside the role or powers of the program
- Failure to complete required initial or ongoing training
- Failure to accept assignments over a period of twelve months
- Breach of confidentiality
- Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties
- Conflict of interest which cannot be resolved
- Falsification of application materials or misrepresentation of facts during the Screening process
- Falsification of any materials included in a report to the court
- Failure to report significant case information to the court
- Criminal activities
- Existence of child abuse or neglect allegations
- Initiation of ex-parte communication with the court

The CASA volunteer shall be provided with a confidential memo identifying the reason(s) for the dismissal. At the time of a volunteer dismissal, all case materials and notes must be turned into the CASA office immediately. If the case has not been terminated, the Volunteer Coordinator shall appoint a new CASA volunteer as soon as possible, and all parties to the case and their representatives will be notified in writing or by phone.

Summary of Case activity

The following is a summary of CASA volunteer activities from the time of case assignment to case closure.

1. The Judge orders appointment of a CASA. The CASA Director/Volunteer Coordinator contacts the volunteer and gives a factual summary of the case and other available information, i.e. caseworker's name, next hearing date, etc.
2. After the CASA volunteer accepts the case, the CASA Director/Volunteer Coordinator mail's court documents and the judge's order of appointment to the CASA volunteer.
3. The CASA volunteer contacts the caseworker to make an appointment to review the child's case file and to interview the worker. Request the date for the next planning or review conference for the child.
4. The CASA volunteer completes an independent investigation of the case by gathering information from the child, parents, foster parents, caseworker, mental health professionals, school personnel, and any other people with relevant information. The purpose of an investigation by the CASA volunteer is to find out as much as possible about the child, the family, the alleged incident which brought the child into court and the plan for a permanent home for the child.

- a. Make sure that you review the social service file and speak with the caseworker personally. Determine the names, addresses, and phone numbers of parents and foster parents, history of previous contact with the court or social service system, child's current placement, child's school, services being received by the child and family, other agencies involved with the child and family, special characteristics of the child, and plan for permanent home for the child.
 - b. Contact the child's caretaker and set an appointment to visit. Try to ascertain the child's true feelings and independent thoughts. Don't rehash the incident that led the child to the court if you have sufficient information from other sources. CASA volunteers need to be particularly sensitive when talking with children who have been sexually abused.
 - c. Contact the parents and request an appointment to meet with them. If criminal charges are pending, they may want to have their attorney present or they may exercise the right to remain silent.
 - d. Contact the foster parents and set an appointment to meet with them to discuss the child. This may be done at the same time that you visit the child; however, you need the opportunity to talk separately with the child and the foster parents.
 - e. Contact the school, mental health professionals, and other relevant parties and set an appointment to obtain information about the child. Be sure you take your court appointment with you to these meetings. You may request to be involved in any planning meetings regarding the child.
5. Write a court report succinctly setting forth your findings and recommendations. Submit the report to the CASA office 24 hours prior to the court hearing (Monday Morning by 11:00am.)
 6. Attend the court hearing. Provide a copy of your report to the judge, county attorney, Guardian Ad litem, and the caseworker. Obtain a copy of the caseworker's court report.
 7. Upon the court's disposition, monitor the case as long as the child remains under the court's jurisdiction to ensure that the court orders are carried out. Continue to investigate new developments in the case and examine the child's current placement, health, education and psychological needs.
 8. Attend any further hearings and planning conferences. Remain involved with the case until the child is permanently placed back home, adoption occurs, or commitment is rescinded.
 9. Upon closure of the case, return all case-related materials to the CASA office.

Approved by Board of Directors

11/2011