

What is a CASA Volunteer?

A CASA volunteer is an ordinary person performing extraordinary duties. Court Appointed Special Advocates are members of the community – just like you – with a heart for children choosing to help a child navigate the difficulties of the juvenile court system.

After a thorough background investigation and the completion of a 30 hour training process, each CASA volunteer is sworn in as an officer of the court and appointed by a Judge of the Juvenile Dependency Court to investigate and report back to the court on the wants and needs of a child in the dependency court system.

CASAs spend time with the child in order to form an honest and trusting relationship with them. CASAs get to know the child, their needs and their concerns in order to speak for them in court, at home and school. CASAs conduct a thorough investigation into the child's case, they interview professionals and talk with all parties involved in the case in order to understand, identify and then advocate for the very best interest of the child. CASAs submit a report to the Judge of the facts and findings of their investigation. Their report also includes the child's wants, needs and any comments to the court as well as the CASA's recommendations to the court based on the very best interest of the child.

Simply put, CASA volunteers get to know the child and their circumstances and then advocates to ensure that the child gets what he or she needs.

As one CASA stated; "CASA's are the glue between the cracks that are a broken foster care system."

Other FACTS about CASA:

- CASA volunteers are not paid. CASAs are the only unpaid adult relationship in a foster child's life.
- CASA volunteers commit to remaining on the case through the duration of the child's hearing (on average, 18 months) – Many CASAs choose to then take on another case.
- CASA volunteers receive over 30 hours of initial training and must participate in 12 hours of continuing education each year.
- CASAs undergo a comprehensive federal & state criminal and child abuse background investigation and must agree to being fingerprinted.
- CASAs meet face to face with their youth weekly and attend important meetings and conferences pertaining to their youth, ensuring all decisions made are in the best interest of their youth.

It is the responsibility of each CASA to:

1. **Support and encourage their youth, expose them to life experiences and provide resources needed to prepare them for a transition from foster care into adulthood. CASAs help their youth develop the knowledge and skills needed to thrive as independent, self-sufficient functioning members of society.**
2. **CASAs help to find and connect their youth with loving, caring, supportive adults willing commit to forming life-long, healthy and appropriate relationships that the youth can turn to for support, encouragement and an overall sense of belonging.**

Requirements for Becoming a CASA:

- CASA volunteers must be 21 years or older.
- CASA volunteers must agree to be fingerprinted and undergo a comprehensive background check.
- CASA Volunteers must have proof of auto insurance and a valid Driver's License.
- CASA volunteers must have a clean driving record with no more than 3 points on their record and no DUI convictions.
- CASA volunteers must not have any felony convictions or misdemeanors of a crime against a child.
- CASA volunteers must not have an open CPS case against them or anyone in their household.
- CASA volunteers must not be a current foster parent or be a volunteer or employee of any child welfare agency or other company that could create a conflict of interest.



CASA of San Joaquin County is recruiting:

For an application or more information about becoming a CASA volunteer, please send email inquiries to
Trinidad Newcomb: Tnewcomb@nochildabuse.org

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Establish a trusting relationship with their child and understand their immediate and long term wants and needs.
2. Support their child throughout their court proceedings, help them to understand the court process and make sure their opinions are heard in court.
3. Review all records pertaining to the child including family history, education, medical and mental health.
4. Observe the child and their relationships with the others in their life, interview professionals and other appropriate individuals.
5. Identify and explore potential resources to facilitate family preservation, early family reunification or alternative permanency planning.
6. Explain the CASA volunteer's role, duties, and responsibilities to all parties associated with a case;
7. Make recommendations to the court concerning the best interests of the child.
8. Communicate the child's needs to the child's school and educators, doctors and therapists, foster parents and to the court.
9. Ensure court orders and case plan goals for the child are implemented in a timely manner.
10. Perform other duties necessary for the child's development, ensuring their well being, proving them with the best chance at success or as determined by the court.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CALIFORNIA CHILDREN

CASA of San Joaquin County

"A Powerful Voice in the Life of a Child"

CASA of San Joaquin County

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Child Advocates / Parent Coaches
Child Abuse Prevention Council

