



## What is CASA?

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### What is a CASA Volunteer?

- > CASA volunteers are trained advocates appointed by the Judge to help determine the child's best interest.
- > CASA of Lackawanna, working closely with the Office of Family Services and the Dependency Court system, manages the program

### What kind of training do CASA Volunteers go through?

- > Each volunteer is subject to a thorough screening process, including background checks, interviews, and thirty-two hours of initial training where volunteers learn about the human service system, the juvenile court, and issues such as substance abuse and mental health as well as the special needs of children who are involved in abuse and neglect cases.
- > After being sworn-in by the Judge as official CASA Volunteers, they must complete at least twelve hours of additional in-service training each year.

### What does a CASA volunteer do?

- > CASA volunteers are responsible for taking the time to find out as much information as possible about the child and the child's circumstances through reviewing relevant records and interviewing all relevant people involved in the case, most importantly, the child. They should visit with the child each month.
- > CASA volunteers then submit a written report to the Court to recommend to the Judge what they believe is best for the child's future. In all cases, CASA volunteers advocate for safe and permanent homes for children.

### Do CASA volunteers understand the importance of confidentiality?

- > CASA volunteers must take an oath before the Court that requires them to fulfill the roles assigned to them and to do so while respecting the confidentiality of all information and/or reports revealed to them.
- > CASA volunteers are trained to only share information with direct parties to the case and only the direct parties to the case will have access to review the CASA reports submitted to the Judge.

### What information should I share with the CASA?

- > With a Court Order, CASA volunteers have access to all documents that relate to the child in the case.
- > CASA volunteers should be invited to all meetings regarding the child.
- > CASA volunteers should be notified any time a child is to be moved.

### How is a CASA volunteer different from the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)?

- > CASA volunteers are unpaid volunteers, and the GAL is an attorney representing the legal interests of the child.
- > CASA volunteers are not a party to the case and cannot bring a child's case back before the Judge.
- > The CASA volunteer's role is one of a "Friend of the Court" and an impartial observer, seeking information as the Judge would if would if time permitted.

### Where can I find out more information about CASA?

- > For more information, you can call CASA of Lackawanna at (570)558-3971 or visit [www.casaoflackawanna.org](http://www.casaoflackawanna.org)