



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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# Introduction



## Advocates for Children CASA

The role of the CASA volunteer is outlined in the Colorado Children's Code and adopted by the 18th Judicial District Courts and the Departments of Human Services, as evidenced by the signed Memorandums of Understanding between Advocates for Children CASA, the courts, and human services.

National CASA Standards are listed in parenthesis throughout this document.

Advocates for Children CASA is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that recruits, trains, and supports community volunteers who advocate for children and youth who have open dependency & neglect cases, truancy cases, juvenile delinquency cases, need additional educational advocacy, or are an adolescent in need of support in obtaining life skills towards self-sufficiency and emancipation. Our compassionate Court Appointed Special Advocates, volunteers, mentors, and tutors speak up for these children and youth's best interests.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide volunteers with clear guidelines, expectations, and program practices to support your service to children and youth based on an alignment with the policies and guiding principles of Advocates for Children CASA and the National CASA Standards for Local CASA Programs. All volunteers are expected to understand and adhere to the policies and procedures set out in this document.



# Who We Are

## Our Mission

Improving the lives of children and youth who have experienced abuse, neglect or other life challenges, by connecting them with volunteer advocates and activating community partnerships.

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## Our Vision

All children dream, thrive, and grow with a sense of belonging and empowerment to build a successful future.



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Advocates for Children CASA recognizes and values diverse people, perspectives, and stories. We are committed to the ongoing work of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout all aspects of our organization. As volunteers, you have learned about personal and systemic bias through training to enable you to advocate for just and equitable outcomes for all the youth and families you serve. We value the diversity of life experiences of our volunteers, staff, Board, community partners, youth, and families including differences in race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, ability, age, and many other aspects. Advocates for Children CASA will provide opportunities for all stakeholders to learn, understand, and grow as we make conscious efforts to practice the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are committed to the wellbeing of vulnerable children in our community and to the wellbeing of our volunteers so they feel safe, respected, and heard by the Advocates for Children CASA Team.

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## Description of Programming

Advocates for Children CASA has a number of volunteer opportunities, both court-appointed and not involved with court, to help ensure the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of children and youth from birth to 24 years. As a volunteer you have been trained to carry out the responsibilities of your role. You are assigned to one case (or one family unit) at a time and are asked to commit to remaining on the case until closure. You work closely with the professionals and parents/guardians and are supported by Case Coordinators at Advocates for Children CASA. You may be the one consistent adult in the life of the child(ren)/youth during challenging times, and the foundation of a caring and authentic relationship is the basis of strong advocacy for all volunteer opportunities.

# Value of Professional Volunteers

Community volunteers who are trained to be advocates for vulnerable children and youth in our community are considered “professional volunteers.” Your service as a trusted adult who is focused on the best interests and wellbeing of children provides a much-needed additional layer of consistent support that is shown to improve outcomes for the young people you serve. Throughout your pre-service training you learn about the importance of building trusting relationships with the children and youth through the weekly time you spend with them.

Your time, insight, documentation, advocacy, and questions are valued by all who are working to ensure that “all children dream, thrive and grow with a sense of empowerment to build a successful future.” You are part of a vibrant team of volunteers, professionals, and community members who all have a part in enhancing the lives and futures of children. We thank you for your service and are here to support you throughout your journey as a volunteer.

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## Court-Appointed Volunteers

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are trained volunteers who represent the best interests of children and youth who have been abused or neglected (Dependency & Neglect Court) or are involved in Juvenile Delinquency or Truancy Court. If assigned a court-involved case, you are appointed by a Judge and serve as the voice of the child(ren)/youth in the courtroom. Your commitment is for a minimum of 18 months, with the option to continue beyond that time if the case remains open in court. You help to ensure that the child(ren)/youth are in safe, permanent, and thriving environments. You make independent recommendations to the court that include areas such as a child(ren)/youth's placement, school, and emotional wellbeing. You remain with that (those) child(ren)/youth throughout the duration of a case and oftentimes are one of the only stable and caring adults that the child(ren)/youth can turn to during a difficult time.

You, with the support and supervision of program staff, will make recommendations in the court report regarding placement, visitation and appropriate services for the child(ren)/youth and family.

You may attend all court hearings to present information and advocate for the child(ren)/youth's best interests. With the support of your case coordinator, you are responsible for being aware of scheduled court dates and preparing in advance by gathering information and submitting reports. You will also provide a verbal update during the hearing. You should ensure that the child(ren)/youth's best interests are being represented at every stage of the case.

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## **Volunteers Not Appointed by the Court**

Volunteers not appointed by the court are trained volunteers who work with youth, families, and/or caregivers to support and encourage youth-driven goals through the Legacy Project and Tutoring Program. You help youth to develop life skills towards independence and improve education outcomes. You commit to one year initially and can renew for another year with the agreement of both you and the youth. If working in the Legacy Project you will work to develop an Individual Learning Plan that helps the youth identify areas of need and steps to build a successful future for themselves.



# Guiding Principles

As an Advocates for Children CASA Volunteer, you will:

- Uphold the credibility and dignity of the CASA concept by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional, and humane manner,
  - Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality,
  - Use your authority appropriately, nor condone any illegal act or unethical practices related to your program or community,
  - Not use CASA for personal gain,
  - Recognize the importance of collaboration, (Standard 2.A.3.)
  - Avoid any action which could adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity of Advocates for Children CASA,
  - Recognize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, (Standard 2.A.2.)
  - Serve and respond to requests without bias because of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, or handicap, and
  - Recognize the importance of family preservation and/or reunification. (Standard 2.A.1.)
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## Role of a Volunteer

Volunteer Qualifications: (Standard 8.A.2.b.)

- Interest in the rights and needs of children and youth
- Must be at least 21 years of age (Standard 8.B.1.)
- Complete an application and interview
- Pass required criminal and motor vehicle background checks (Standard 8.B.1.)
- Willing to commitment to serving at least one child/youth/case in the program for 18 months (Standard 8.A.2.c.)
- Successfully complete 32+ hours of pre-service training and be officially sworn in (Standard 8.B.1.)
- Agree to complete 12 hours of continuing education annually

- Ability to work with a broad spectrum of the community, including at-risk youth, in a sensitive, positive, and objective manner
- Strong communication skills
- Willingness to collaborate with professionals and parents/caregivers
- Open to working with and learning about children and youth from diverse backgrounds.

### **Knowledge and Understanding:**

- Individuals working in CASA programs as a volunteer must be trained in the operations of the court and child welfare systems, and in the nature of child abuse and neglect. You must respect a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment that meets the child's best interests.

### **Volunteer General Duties:**

#### **Training**

- Attend mandatory pre-service training sessions. The information you learn in training is instrumental to working with the children and youth we serve. Only one webinar may be missed in the case of an emergency.
- Complete 12 hours of continuing education annually (See "Continuing Education"). (Standard 8.F.5.n.)

#### **Working with Children and Youth**

- Maintain strict confidentiality.
- Report any incident of abuse or neglect, or any situation in which you have reason to believe that a child/youth is in imminent danger to the appropriate authorities and your case coordinator (see "Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect"). (Standard 8.F.5.a.)
- If able, assist with transporting child(ren)/youth to events, community service opportunities, visits, appointments, staffings, etc. pertinent to the child(ren)'s/youth's individual circumstances.

#### **Advocacy**

- Identify and advocate for the best interests of the child(ren)/youth in areas that will promote their overall health, wellbeing, and ability to thrive now and in the future. (Standard 8.F.5.c.)
- Contact the child(ren)/youth once a week with in-person visits and ensure that essential needs are being met and goals are being reached. (Standard 8.F.5.g.)
- Make recommendations for services for the child(ren)/youth and their family. (Standard 8.F.5.h.)

- Obtain first-hand a clear understanding of the needs and situations of the child(ren)/youth by conducting ongoing review of all relevant documents and records and communicating with the child(ren)/youth, parents, social workers, teachers, and other relevant persons to gather information about the child's situation. (Standard 8.F.5.b.)

### **Court**

- Attend court hearings, if applicable, when possible, to advocate for the child(ren)/youth's best interests. (Standard 8.F.5.f.)
- Complete required reports in a timely manner that include information and recommendations about the child(ren)/youth's needs and best interests. (Standard 8.F.5.e.) Note: Frequency of reports are dependent on case and case type.
- Prepare a verbal update for court hearings, if applicable, regardless of attendance at the hearing.
- Assist in the identification of resources appropriate to meet the needs of the child(ren)/youth by using the Volunteers Guide and consulting with the program staff.
- For court-appointed cases, seek information about whether a permanency plan has been created for the child, make recommendations concerning permanency, and research permanent connections for the child(ren)/youth, when appropriate. (Standard 8.F.5.i.)
- For court-appointed cases, monitor implementation of service plans and court orders and assess whether court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner and whether additional review hearings should be scheduled with the court. (Standard 8.F.5.j.)

### **Documentation**

- Maintain and complete accurate records of time and activities in Contact Log in the program's web-based data tracking system, Optima

### **Communication and Collaboration**

- If court-appointed, in discussion with your case coordinator about the most appropriate avenue, inform the court promptly of important developments in the case. (Standard 8.F.5.k.)
- Collaborate and coordinate with the professional team and coordinator on a regular basis to ensure service provision that is in the child(ren)/youth's best interests. (Standard 8.F.5.d., Standard 8.F.5.l.)
- Minimum of monthly contact with case coordinator to review the status of your case (Standard 8.F.5.m.) and to discuss your recommendations for the child(ren)/youth. (Standard 8.F.5.p.)

# Assignment to a Case

After program acceptance and completion of training by Advocates for Children CASA, you will be sworn in as Officers of the Court by a presiding juvenile judge. (Standard 8.D.3.)

You will be matched to an available case based on your stated preferences, the staff's evaluation during training, and current current needs. You will be contacted by a case coordinator to hear a case pitch. The case pitch discussion will include Information about the history of the case and any information the coordinator has on the child(ren) or youth. No specific identifying details or confidential information will be shared with you until after your official assignment to the case has occurred. The coordinator will also provide you with additional insight on the type of case and answer as many questions as possible. You will then be offered the opportunity to take some time to consider whether you would like to move forward with accepting the case. If you do not accept the case, the coordinator will continue to communicate with you to understand the reasons and to match the volunteer with another case.

You will be assigned to one family at a time. Depending on the situation a family may have more than one case. An exception to serving more than one family at a time must be approved by Leadership. (Standard 8.F.8.)

When you are appointed/assigned, emphasis must be on the child(ren)/youth in need of support rather than the needs of the parents. SAFETY of the child(ren)/youth is always the primary goal.

## **For Court-Appointed Volunteers:**

You have no authority to function on a case until officially appointed by Order of the Court. After you accept a specific case, an Order of Appointment will be sent to the Judicial Officer for their agreement and signature prior to the volunteer beginning your duties. Volunteers will be assigned to your case in Optima at the time of case assignment.

All authority ceases when the Oder of Termination is submitted. Continuing to represent as a CASA after submission of the Oder of Termination may result in legal action.

### **For Volunteers Not Appointed by the Court:**

The child(ren)/youth and parents must consent to participation in the program, in writing, prior to the assignment. Following your assignment, the case coordinator will reiterate the program expectations to the child/youth and discuss tasks, time commitment and best methods of communication for you to use with the youth/child(ren) and placement/family members.

Volunteers will remain assigned to the child(ren)/youth until the case is successfully closed or Advocates for Children CASA deems it appropriate to end the pairing/assignment. Continuing to represent as an assigned volunteer after the end of a case may result in legal action.

If working with The Legacy Project, youth will have an Intake Assessment conducted by a case coordinator prior to being assigned a volunteer to gain an understanding of their needs and goals the. The youth will be required to complete pertinent assessments at six-month intervals during the program.



# Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the cornerstone upon which volunteering at Advocates for Children CASA is built. As a volunteer with Advocates for Children CASA you are expected to respect the right to privacy of all individuals and to keep all information about your work confidential. (Standard 4.B. and Standard 8.B.6.b.)

Once sworn in, you are bound by the confidentiality oath taken before the judge. This oath states:

I, [state name], do solemnly swear to support the Laws of the State of Colorado, and that I will faithfully perform all the duties of a Court Appointed Special Advocate of Advocates for Children CASA to the best of my ability, and that I will maintain the confidentiality of all my information contained in the Court Records or any other records which I may review in connection with my duties.

And by the confidentiality requirements of Section 19-1-211, Colorado Revised Statutes:

19-1-211. Confidentiality.

A CASA VOLUNTEER SHALL NOT DISCLOSE THE CONTENTS OF ANY DOCUMENT, RECORD, OR OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO A CASE TO WHICH THE CASA VOLUNTEER HAS ACCESS IN THE COURSE OF AN INVESTIGATION. ALL SUCH INFORMATION SHALL BE CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL AND SHALL NOT BE DISCLOSED TO PERSONS OTHER THAN THE COURT AND PARTIES TO THE ACTION.

All information gathered, including during the training period, falls under strict regulations governing privileged communication. During the training period, any case information encountered, including, but not limited to court observations, case discussions, or any other information disclosed to you, will be held in confidence. Failure to do so can jeopardize your future as a Volunteer.

You must respect the child(ren)/youth's and families' rights to privacy regarding personal information. In addition to the above oath and policies, the following must also be adhered to:

- Disclosure or verification of case information shall not be made to anyone who is not a party to the case.

- No information shall be released to anyone not authorized to receive it, without the express written and dated consent of all parties.
- Confidential information shall only be shared with the CASA Staff, the Department of Human Services, the Guardian ad Litem (GAL), and the court.
- Case records and notes shall be secured and kept private and inaccessible to public view.
- Discussions of case-related material are not to be held in hallways, elevators, or other public places.
- Communication with the court must also be copied to all parties. You will not engage in ex parte communication regarding information pertaining to their case.
- You will check with the CASA Staff if they have any questions about how information can be discussed before proceeding.
- When discussing cases in wider audiences (such as a community group interested in CASA work), only general information may be shared – names of people, exact locations, and any other identifiable information will not be used.
- When discussing cases at Advocates for Children CASA sponsored events and trainings, you are bound under the confidentiality oath and requirements.
- It is the your job to transmit the information you collect to the court. It is important to let all parties to a case know this at the beginning of a case.

You should not promise a child/youth that statements will be kept secret or confidential from other parties on. You should proceed on the assumption that all statements made or relied on should be shared judiciously. Any information shared by the child(ren) youth that impacts safety and wellbeing needs to be shared with the professional team. Coordinators can support volunteers in handling these situations.



# Maintaining Accurate Records

Optima is Advocates for Children CASA's internal database. This database has been developed specifically for CASA programs and is used by most CASA agencies across the country.

## **Volunteer File:**

Each Volunteer has a profile in Optima to which your assigned case is attached. (Standard 8.H.1.) You are expected to keep your contact information, emergency contacts, and all other data up to date during your time as a Volunteer with Advocates for Children CASA. Your confidential volunteer record will contain, at a minimum:

- Application
- Emergency & identifying contact information
- Job description
- Reference documentation
- Documentation of record checks
- Training records
- Performance evaluations and any other applicable documentation related to performance
- Documentation of volunteer status
- Copy of volunteer's driver's license, motor vehicles records check and verification of automobile insurance, if approved for transportation
- Name of each child assigned
- Date of each assignment
- Date of release from each assignment

Volunteers may coordinate a time with the program staff to review your personal file in the Advocates for Children CASA office. You may submit additions and corrections to your volunteer record. The file may not be removed from the office and will be maintained at the Advocates for Children CASA office per the program's record retention policy. These records will be retained while the Volunteer is active and for 10 years after a Volunteer becomes inactive.

## Case File:

This profile allows you to access your case information such as phone numbers, addresses, and names of family members and professionals on the case. No outside agencies or professionals can access case-specific information in Optima. Limited demographic information is collected by Colorado CASA to track statewide demographic and macro-level data such as broad case closing reasons and the type of final placement of a child.

Volunteers are expected to keep case information and details up to date throughout your assignment to the case. This includes appointments, interviews, and information about the child(ren)/youth and their life circumstances. (Standard 8.F.5.o.) Important data points, the accuracy of which is critical to Advocates for Children CASA's internal and external reporting, include:

- The spelling of the child(ren)/youth's name
- Birthdate
- Gender
- Race
- Placement
- School

In addition to having the above-listed accurate details of the child(ren)/youth, it is also critical that you maintain accurate case notes and records of the advocacy and work done on your case. (Standard 8.F.o.) This information is captured in the Contact Logs section of Optima. Important information to document in contact logs include, but are not limited to:

- Time spent with child(ren)/youth
- Observations & conversations during visits or communications with the child(ren)/youth
- Communication with parents/caregivers
- Communication with coordinator
- Communication with professional team/school
- Any additional meetings (i.e., with school, facilitated team meetings, etc.)
- Travel Time
- Money Spent

For time sensitive and emergent information, or information regarding a child being abused or neglected, whether in the present or historically, call or text your coordinator immediately. After notifying your coordinator and taking any additional needed steps, be sure to also document that information in a contact log in Optima. (See "Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect")

All documents related to the child(ren) or youth must be shared with the staff and uploaded into the "Documents" tab in Optima. All records kept by the volunteers must be returned to the Advocates for Children CASA office or destroyed when your assignment to the case ends. (Standard 8.F.5.r.)



# Written Reports

Providing written reports is one of the most critical ways that you will give a report of your child(ren)/youth situation at that time, concerns for their safety and wellbeing, the advocacy that you have provided, and what support and resources they need to dream, thrive, and grow with a sense of belonging and empowerment to build a successful future. (Standard 8.F.5.e.)

Your written report is a summary of what has occurred during the reporting period. It takes all the information you have captured in your contact logs and condenses that information down into a concise yet thoroughly written record. Your report will highlight examples that illustrate your concerns and recommendations with specific examples and reported information to provide context and justification.

Templates for reports will be provided by your case coordinator that are tailored to the type of case you serve on. Court-appointed cases will require a written report for every hearing that is at least 30 days apart. Legacy mentoring cases will require a written report every quarter. Your coordinator will send you a template several weeks before the report is due. Reports submitted to court will be edited by your coordinator and a second staff member. Reports and other records are not to be altered by you or your case coordinator after they are finalized without your agreement. (Standard 8.F.5.r.) You must keep records in a confidential file and they will also be uploaded to Optima. Reports written for court cases will be distributed by CASA staff to the judicial officer, attorneys, caseworker, and any other parties to the case.

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# Hearings

Court-appointed volunteers are asked to attend all hearings for their case, if possible. If you are unable to appear at a hearing, please notify your case coordinator as far in advance as possible. Your case coordinator will ensure your verbal update is given during the hearing and provide notes on the proceedings.

# Meetings

You will attend staffings and other related meetings that are significant to the safety and wellbeing of the child(ren)/youth. (Standard 8.F.5.b., Standard 8.F.5.d.) Document all meetings and important information gathered in your contact logs in Optima.

## **With Children and Youth:**

Arrange for an initial meeting with the child(ren)/youth as soon as possible following your assignment. The first meeting will typically take place in the child/youth's home or placement and will be shorter to allow you to introduce yourself and to find out what your child(ren)/youth enjoy and like to do. If a Consent for Transportation form is needed (see "Transportation"), you cannot transport the child(ren)/youth until signed. Your coordinator will work with you on this. It is required that you meet with your child(ren)/youth once a week with as much consistency as possible. You will schedule your visits with parents/caregivers and the youth, if that is appropriate. Work with your case coordinator if there are circumstances that impact weekly visits.

## **With Parents:**

It is important to introduce yourself to parents/caregivers at the beginning of a case. Even if your assigned child(ren)/youth is not living with their parents, establishing a relationship with them early on in the case can prove beneficial as the case progresses. Reunification is always the goal of Dependency & Neglect cases. And even if reunification does not occur or the child is not placed with one or both of their parents, it is typically in your child(ren)/youth's best interest for you to have a positive relationship with their parents. Your case coordinator will provide you with guidance and direction if the details of your case are such that it is most appropriate to forego building a relationship with the parents at the beginning of your case.

Having a positive relationship with your child(ren)/youth's parents is even more important when the child(ren)/youth live in the home with their parents. As with non-parental caregivers, this relationship will be essential for frequent, consistent visits with your assigned child(ren)/youth and receiving updates in many areas of the child(ren)/youth's life. In your initial meeting with the parents take time to explain your role as a volunteer and answer any questions they have to begin establishing a positive relationship and building rapport.

## With the Caseworker, Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), and other professionals:

When these professionals are involved in a case, you will have an initial meeting that is set up by your coordinator. That meeting is called a Case Planning Meeting (CPM). It is a time to learn more about the case, ask questions, and gain insight about how you can contribute to meeting the child(ren)/youth's needs. For all court-appointed cases this meeting takes place before you contact parents/caregivers or meet the child(ren)/youth.

Some non-court cases may have professionals involved, in which case you will communicate with them with the permission of the parents. Ongoing collaboration with professionals will continue throughout the case.

You will often be in a position where it is appropriate to facilitate communication between parties in the case. In difficult situations or when conflicts arise on cases, it may be appropriate to have a staffing. That is a meeting where all parties are invited to discuss the future direction of the case and what services should be provided. Although it is typically not the volunteer's role to call a staffing, it is appropriate on an as needed basis. Please discuss this option with your case coordinator if you think it may be appropriate.

You are expected to communicate with all parties on the case. It is asked that you regularly email the professionals and important people about any visits, important contacts, or important information gathered regarding the child(ren)/youth on the case.



### **With Other Professionals:**

If the child(ren)/youth are school age, it is asked that you be in contact with the school, when feasible, to gather pertinent information regarding their academic progress and needs. If the child is in special education, you can attend staffings and Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. For court-appointed cases your Order of Appointment provides the school and other professionals with the documentation they need to release the information to you.

Other professionals you may contact for pertinent information include doctors, lawyers, and counselors. If there is a mental health professional on the case, you may contact them to share information relating to their work with the child(ren)/youth. Therapists are prohibited from disclosing confidential communications to any third party, including CASA volunteers, unless mandated or permitted by law. Please consult with your case coordinator prior to initial contact with your child(ren)/youth's therapist.

On voluntary cases, you do not have permission to gather information from others who are involved with the youth without the parent providing a release to those individuals. You can work with your coordinator to determine what information is needed to support the wellbeing of the child(ren)/youth.

### **With Your Case Coordinator:**

You will meet with your coordinator to learn about the case before accepting it. Once the case is accepted you are expected to be in contact with your case coordinator at least monthly. Coordinators are available for problem-solving, providing resources, and being an emotional support throughout your case.

Coordinators communicate program expectations and guide you through your work with the child(ren)/youth, including completion of contact logs, wellbeing assessments, court reports, and in-service training. They will discuss with you comments from the professionals, noting areas of achievement/progress, providing resources, identifying areas in which additional support is needed, discussing findings, observation, and strategies for supporting youth/child(ren). Coordinators are often included in emails with the professional team to provide additional guidance and support to you as situations arise on your case.



# Transportation

(Standard 6.G.10. and Standard 8.F.9.)

This policy allows for transportation on a case-by-case basis. Although transportation may be allowed, this policy is intentionally restrictive for liability and safety reasons and strict guidelines will be adhered to.

A consent and liability waiver must be in your file prior to being able to transport youth. Transportation will be approved if the following are in place:

- You must have a current (within the past year) Motor Vehicle Record on file as well as a copy of your driver's license and auto insurance. You should have adequate auto insurance coverage in compliance with Colorado state law. If you do not have an MVR and a current and valid driver's license on file or do not have proof of adequate, current, and valid auto insurance, you will not be allowed to transport children or youth. You need to update your license and insurance records when they expire.
- Before transportation may take place, your case coordinator will ensure that the youth's parent or legal guardian signs a Consent for Transportation Form permitting you to transport the child(ren)/youth. This form can be signed in person, scanned, and emailed. The form will be uploaded to Optima. The Consent for Transportation Form is not required for children/youth in the custody of a Department of Human Services. However, if custody is given to a parent or kin during the life of the case, a Consent for Transportation Form needs to be signed at that time and uploaded into Optima.
- You will abide by all federal, state, and local transportation and safety laws.
- You will document in a contact log each time you transport the child(ren)/youth. This documentation must include date, time of transportation, total time spent transporting the youth, location, and purpose of visit.

When considering transportation of the child(ren)/youth, the following points are important to remember:

- We ask that, as appropriate to the circumstance and dependent on your availability, you assist with transporting child(ren)/youth to CASA's events for children and youth, community service opportunities, visits, appointments, staffings, etc.
- It is important to remember, however, that it is not your responsibility to provide or ensure that the child(ren)/youth have transportation to school, appointments, or any other errands. This is the role of the parent and/or caregiver, and GAL and caseworker, if applicable.
- Although it is important to establish a relationship with your assigned child(ren)/youth, it is also important to remember appropriate boundaries around if or when you will provide transportation. This is especially important when working with older children and youth who may ask you to provide transportation outside of your regularly scheduled visits.
- At no time can the child(ren)/youth be taken to your home nor can anyone from your personal life, even if approved to meet the child(ren)/youth, be taken to or know the location of the child(ren)/youth's home. (Standard 8.F.5.q.i.)

If someone from your personal life has been approved to spend time with your assigned child(ren)/youth, all interactions must be chaperoned by you. If you, the child(ren)/youth, and the approved individual will be driving together, only you can drive the vehicle while the child(ren)/youth are inside. The other adult cannot drive. Should something occur while in the vehicle, you have more safeguards in place through your being a trained and supervised volunteer through our agency, in addition to protections through Colorado's Volunteer Service Act. Please see the "Introducing Your Family & Friends" section if you would like to explore having someone from your personal life meet your child(ren)/youth.

# Wellbeing Assessments

An important part of your job as a volunteer is monitoring your assigned child(ren)/youth's strengths and needs, and reporting on your advocacy actions. Wellbeing assessments provide an opportunity to pause and reflect on those strengths and needs and brainstorm your next steps. Use them as an opportunity to:

- Check-in with key partners on the case
- Consider how your assigned child is doing in key domains
- Reflect on what the child needs to best cope with challenges to ultimately thrive

In addition, this information helps our program ensure we are providing high quality, best interest advocacy for all children and youth assigned a volunteer. They allow us to track progress on individual cases and evaluate trends statewide to ensure we are best supporting CASA volunteers and serving children and youth. The information you provide will be vital as we engage external stakeholders and secure resources to continue to support our important work. To answer the assessment completely and accurately, check-in on key areas of the child(ren)/youth's life including safety and permanency, health, education or development, siblings and other relationships, and transition to adulthood if 14 or older.

## **Dependency & Neglect Cases:**

Wellbeing assessments for Dependency & Neglect (D&N) cases are administered by the Colorado CASA office. A survey link for each child/youth on your case will be sent from Colorado CASA to the email in your Optima file. The assessments occur at the beginning of your case, every few months throughout the life of your case, and then following your case closure.

## **Legacy Mentor Cases:**

For youth accepted into the program voluntarily without a court order, assessments will be given during the intake and at the six- and twelve-month marks of program involvement. The link for these assessments will come from your case coordinator and are housed internally at Advocates for Children CASA. The Individual Learning Plan will be the tool used to guide your work

and focus with the youth. Your case coordinator will check in with you at least once a month and check Optima to offer support and guidance. Staff is always available for consultation.

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# Continuing Education

(Standard 8.C.9.)

Continuing education opportunities will be offered throughout the year and all volunteers are required to obtain a minimum of 12 hours of continuing training each agency fiscal year. All training provided by the Advocates for Children CASA organization will be eligible for continuing education hours. You will need to enter a record of all your continuing education hours into the training logs tab in Optima. Please note that is a different area than contact logs for your assigned case.

Training offered by outside agencies must be approved by your case coordinator or the Training Manager to count as continuing education hours. Reimbursement for expenses related to these workshops may be available as the budget allows.

In the event you have not completed the requirement of continued training hours, your case coordinator will work with you to address barriers to completion and create a plan for coming into compliance. Failure to complete the required in-service training hours could jeopardize your continued service on a case.

Continuing education is required of all active volunteers, including those who are not currently serving on a case but wish to be assigned again. While not serving on a case you will receive recommendations for trainings and materials to satisfy the continuing education requirements. Prior to being re-staffed on a case you will be required to complete some continuing education hours if you have not been working on achieving the needed hours.

# Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

(Standard 8.F.5.a)

Immediately report any suspected child abuse or neglect which is observed or discovered while serving your child(ren)/youth. A report should be made by calling the child abuse and neglect hotline at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS. It is important to note that identifying child/youth information is acceptable to share with the hotline when reporting suspected child abuse or neglect (i.e., name, location).

You need to inform your case coordinator as soon as possible after learning of the abuse or neglect and discuss the next steps in reporting it to the appropriate parties.

You do not investigate the possible abuse. The Department of Human Services will determine the need for and whether to complete an investigation.



# Signing Waivers for Child/Youth

Volunteers cannot sign any type of waiver or agreement for a child or youth to participate in activities. All waivers must be signed by the parent, guardian, or entity holding custody of the child. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- Horseback riding
- Swimming, jet skiing, boating, or other water sports
- Skiing
- Trampoline parks
- Sports teams

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## Introducing Your Family & Friends

If you are interested in introducing your family or friends to your assigned child(ren)/youth this must first be discussed with your case coordinator and approved by all necessary parties. Approval by Advocates for Children CASA to introduce your family or friends will be granted only after it is determined that such an introduction would be in the best interest of the child(ren)/youth and improve their wellbeing. The time you spend with your assigned child(ren)/youth is time dedicated to their needs and best interests, which focus can be altered when your family or friends are also present. Approval may also need to be granted by the parents, caregivers, GAL, and/or caseworker.

# Social Media

(Standard 7.A.2.f., Standard 8.B.6.c., Standard 8.B.10.b. and Standard 9.A.5.b.)

Social media tools, when used appropriately, can be a powerful way to increase awareness, support, and a sense of community for those engaged in volunteering with at-risk youth and advocacy for abused and neglected child(ren)/youth. A thoughtful approach to online conversations and interactions among people online (on blogs, social networking, link-sharing, etc.) can enhance the reputation of Advocates for Children CASA's movement and help recruit needed supporters, and volunteers.

While Advocates for Children CASA encourages volunteers to join the global online conversation, we also believe it is important that those who choose to do so understand what is recommended, expected, and required when they discuss program-related and CASA-related topics whether at work or on your own time. Our ability to serve children and youth depends on the trust and support of the public, and it is critical that we tell our story well and handle the confidential information entrusted to us responsibly.

The following guidelines will help you engage in online conversations about your involvement with Advocates for Children CASA's cause in a way that is appropriate, yet still interesting.

- **Adding your assigned child(ren)/youth on social media.** While assigned to a case, you are not to become online "friends" with your child(ren)/youth, their family, or any other families you encounter in your capacity as a volunteer with Advocates for Children CASA program. This includes email addresses (besides volunteer email), instant messenger names, blogs, photo sharing sites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and YouTube.



- **Do not reveal confidential information.** Sharing stories that illustrate the values of Advocates for Children CASA is often the most powerful way to engage the public in our cause and promote empathy for the youth we serve. However, National CASA Quality Assurance standards and the policy of Advocates for Children CASA require respect for the youth's and family's rights to privacy regarding personal information and Adherence to the confidentiality restrictions imposed by law and program policies and procedures (See "Confidentiality"). It is unacceptable to discuss online any identifiable details of child(ren)/youth or post pictures that include children or youth served by Advocates for Children CASA. It is acceptable to discuss general details and to use non-identifying pseudonyms so long as the information provided does not contain information recognizable to the family or others associated with the family or case. For example, use general terms such as "youth" instead of "14-year-old girl." You should be careful to protect the dignity of families, child(ren)/youth, and social agencies even if they are not named.
- **Be transparent.** Identify yourself and your role at Advocates for Children CASA when you discuss program-related matters. Write in the first person. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. Be clear that you are speaking for yourself, that the opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Advocates for Children CASA.
- **Always comply with the law regarding copyright/plagiarism.** Never post someone else's work without his or her express permission (other than short quotes that comply with the "fair use" exceptions).
- **Be aware of laws related to libel and defamation of character.** Defamation of character can lead to lawsuits against the author of the statement and will reflect negatively on the program's cause. In choosing your words or content, imagine your supervisor and your family reading everything you post.
- **Be respectful.** Do not pick fights. Be the first to admit and correct your own mistakes. You should show proper consideration for other's privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.

- **Be considerate.** Remember that anyone, including fellow volunteers and staff, may be actively reading what you publish online. Refrain from any communication intended to bash, discredit, or embarrass the program, families, board members, or donors. If you have suggestions for improvements, please state them constructively or, better yet, go through the proper channels to air your concerns and share your suggestions.
- **Be accurate.** Even though your posts may be primarily made up of personal opinions, do your research well and check that your facts are accurate. Make sure you have permission to post any copyrighted or confidential information (e.g., images, statistics) and be careful about posting or linking to items that may contain viruses.
- **Be committed.** If you decide to jump into online communication, do so with a commitment to post regularly and well. Link to others and show your unique contributions. Make it interesting and have fun!
- **Try to add value.** Does your posting provide worthwhile information and perspective? Does it help you, your fellow volunteers, and supporters better understand and feel more connected to our cause? Does it build a positive sense of community?
- **Respect work commitments.** Please remember that blogging and other social networking activities—unless specifically assigned as part of your employment—are personal and should be done on your own time.
- **When in doubt, do not post.** You are responsible for your words and actions wherever you are. Exercise sound judgment and common sense, and, if there is any doubt, DO NOT POST IT. In circumstances where you are uncertain, please contact program staff, the Program Director, or the Executive Director for guidance.
- **Know that the internet is permanent.** Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record even if you “remove/delete” it later or attempt to make it anonymous. If your complete thought, along with its context, cannot be squeezed into a character-restricted space (such as Twitter), provide a link to an online space where the message can be expressed completely and accurately.

Be mindful that what you post can be a reflection on Advocates for Children CASA and can influence the perception and reputation of the program. Be respectful of all individuals, races, religions, and cultures.

# Media Contact

(Standard 9.A.5.b.)

Volunteers should not make any comments to the media about the child(ren)/youth or any Advocates for Children CASA cases. Any general comments about the Advocates for Children CASA should be discussed with program staff prior to talking with the media. All comments or questions should be directed to the Executive Director.

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# Volunteer Recognition

Advocates for Children CASA values its Volunteers and has ongoing programs to recognize the efforts, dedication, and hard work of our Volunteers. Activities may include but are not limited to: (Standard 8.E.6.)

- Notes of appreciation and support.
  - Recognition of other community involvement.
  - Numerous professional development and training opportunities.
  - Acknowledgement of birthdays and other significant life events.
  - Planned networking opportunities with other Volunteers and Staff.
  - Participation in a volunteer survey to provide feedback to help improve your experience with Advocates for Children CASA.
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# Transferring Volunteer

A qualified volunteer who transfers to a new program must complete the full application and screening process, as well as any re-training or continuing education as recommended by Advocates for Children CASA staff. Re-training is to include, at a minimum, training regarding the local court, laws, program policies and procedures, investigation, and report writing. (Standard 8.B.7., Standard 8.C.10.)



# Telephone Numbers

At the start of your case your phone number will be provided to the child(ren)/youth's parents/caregivers, Human Services Caseworker, the GAL, if applicable. If working with a young adult your contact information may also be provided directly to them. Outside of those individuals who will need your phone number for essential case-related communication, you should carefully consider the implications of giving your phone number to child(ren)/youth or family members. The decision of if or when to give out these numbers to them is up to you. You may wish to consult with your case coordinator about this. Messages may be left at the Advocates for Children CASA office, and they will be relayed to you.

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# Conflict of Interest

A volunteer should not be related or have a relationship to any parties to the case or be employed in a position or with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest. Please see the Conflict of Interest Form at the end of this document for more details on what constitutes a conflict of interest. That document must be signed by all volunteers. (Standard 4.A.2.d.)

# Access to Legal Advice

Advocates for Children CASA will provide you with access to legal advice and representation, as needed, for items pertaining to your assigned case.

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## Background Checks

As part of the volunteer screening process, you are required to participate fully in various background checks. The required background checks that will be conducted through Colorado TRAILS, Sterling Volunteers (a service used to conduct background checks), and Electronic Fingerprinting through CBI (Colorado Bureau of Investigation). These background checks provide information related to Child Welfare, Criminal, Driving and Sex Offender information. If a volunteer has lived in Colorado for less than ten (10) years, similar out-of-state background checks will also be conducted. There are scholarship opportunities if payment for background checks is a financial hardship.

You will need to update your background checks every four years. Your driver's license and proof of auto insurance need to be updated with each expiration date. A staff member will contact you to inform you when these items need to be updated.

You must immediately notify the program of any criminal or civil charges filed against you. (Standard 4.A.5.)

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## Mileage

Documentation of any hours, mileage, or money spent that is recorded in Optima logs will be available to you at the end of the calendar year for tax purposes. Please see a tax consultant for more information on volunteer mileage deduction. You must enter this data into Optima to receive an annual statement.

# Equal Opportunity

(Standard 3.D. Standard 8.A.2.d.)

Advocates for Children CASA shall not restrict its services or volunteer opportunities based on race, religion, creed, color, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation or gender.

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# Non-Discrimination

(Standard 3.D.)

Advocates for Children CASA does not discriminate in the solicitation of business, employment, or volunteers on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, gender variance, gender identity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, military status or physical or mental handicap provided that an individual or company is qualified and meets the requirements established by the agency.

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# Victim's Rights

Many of the children/youth served by Advocates for Children CASA are victims of crime due to the reasons of their court case opening. In Colorado, all victims of crime have a right to be heard and participate in various stages of criminal justice proceedings.

Colorado's Victim Rights Amendment states: Any person who is a victim of a criminal act or such person's designee, legal guardian, or surviving immediate family members if such person is deceased, shall have the right to be heard when relevant, informed, and present at all critical stages of the criminal justice process.

For additional information about the Victim Rights Act in Colorado and how you can support your child or youth, please see talk with your coordinator.

# Cooperation in Criminal Investigation of Alleged Child Abuse

If you are asked to produce information or documents, or discuss the facts of any alleged child abuse with any investigator or counsel of record for the office of the prosecuting attorney or the defense attorney:

- No documents (written reports of the incident) shall be produced without having been properly subpoenaed. Cooperation to facilitate the service of subpoenas should be extended as professional courtesy.
- In the event that any investigator or attorney of record wishes to conduct a personal interview, you appear may appear with legal counsel at such an interview.
- If a telephone interview is given, care should be taken to assure the identity of the contact person. It is suggested that you call the office through the main number and be transferred to the person requesting the interview.
- It will not be necessary to be subpoenaed to this personal interview, although every effort should be taken to coordinate the time and date of the interview with the legal counsel.
- Before granting an interview, the volunteer and staff should review what may be discussed in the interview.

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## Volunteers Status:

A volunteer shall be considered active if you are assigned to a case, are unassigned but actively completing continuing education hours, or working to update needed documents and background checks to get reassigned to a case. If you are unable to do the duties and responsibilities that have been described, program staff will address with you any obstacles preventing you



from fulfilling your responsibilities and a plan of action will be created to support you in being a successful volunteer. If you are still unable or unwilling to meet the program requirements, you will be unassigned from the case, inactivated in Optima, and removed from mailing and emailing lists.

If you decide to become active again by participating in the above activities, you must contact Advocates for Children CASA and a decision about how to proceed will be made at that time. After an extensive period between cases, you may be required to participate in certain areas of the initial training as a refresher. If there are special circumstances involved in your inability to participate, approval to remain active within Advocates for Children CASA is at the discretion of the Executive Director.

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# Corrective Action

(Standard 8.G.)

Corrective action may be taken if your work does not meet the expectations laid out for Advocates for Children CASA volunteers in the “Volunteer General Duties” section or if you engage in any inappropriate volunteer practices. Such inappropriate volunteer practices include but are not limited to:

- Taking a youth to the Volunteers 's home or any home other than the child's/youth's current placement. (Standard 8.F.5.q.i)
- Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling (Standard 8.F.5.q.iii)
- Making placement arrangements for the youth (Standard 8.F.5.q.iv)
- Giving money or expensive gifts to the youth, youth's family, or caregiver. (Standard 8.F.5.q.v) This does not include small gifts, birthday acknowledgment, holiday recognition, or taking them out to eat.
- Providing direct service delivery to any parties that could (but not limited to): Lead to a conflict of interest or liability problems or cause a youth/child or a family to become dependent on the Volunteers

Corrective action is within the discretion of the program staff, Program Manager, Program Director, and Executive Director and may include any of the following actions as deemed appropriate:

- Additional supervision
- Temporary leave of absence
- Retraining
- Reassignment
- Referral to another volunteer position
- Separation from the program

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# Conflict Resolution

(Standard 8.F.7.)

**Overall Goal is Communication:** Effective communication is often the key to avoiding conflicts in any organization or setting. It is hoped that disagreements can be resolved through communication among the parties. If assistance is needed to resolve any issues, the following procedure shall be followed:

- **Meet with your case coordinator:** If you disagree with any action, including correction or separation taken by Advocates for Children CASA, or any of its agents, first meet with your case coordinator to discuss your concerns. If the disagreement is with an individual outside Advocates for Children CASA, you and your case coordinator should contact the professional with whom you have a conflict to discuss resolutions or compromises. If you or your coordinator believe that the professional has engaged in inappropriate or unethical behavior, the coordinator should contact the professional's direct supervisor or manager to discuss the concerns.
- **Meet with your case coordinator's supervisor:** If the disagreement is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may elevate your concern to the case coordinator's supervisor.
- **Meet with the Executive Director:** If the disagreement is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may elevate your concern to the Executive Director.

# Case Closure

(Standard 8.D.)

You may be terminated from a case through the following means: Advocates for Children CASA program decision, the case being dismissed from court, or determination by a Judicial Officer that your services are no longer needed. Advocates for Children CASA will have the discretion to terminate your assignment to your case if determined appropriate. When agreed upon between the child(ren)/youth, you, program staff and caregivers of the youth, you may maintain occasional contact with the youth after the case is closed. This is for the benefit of child(ren)/youth and families who have formed a close relationship with their volunteers.

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# Resignation

(Standard 8.D.)

You should remain actively involved with the child(ren)/youth until formally discharged by Advocates for Children CASA or the court. You should consider the assignment a serious personal commitment. You should give honest and adequate notice to your case coordinator if it becomes necessary to leave the program or assignment before the conclusion.

All records kept by the volunteers must be returned to the Advocates for Children CASA office or destroyed when the volunteer assignment terminates.

(Standard 8.F.5.r.)



## Handbook Acknowledgement & Agreement

Please initial each line, then sign and date at the bottom.

I have read this Volunteer Handbook in its entirety.

I agree to contact CASA Staff if I have any questions, concerns, or challenges.

I understand that I am representing the Advocates for Children CASA organization.

I commit to fulfilling my role as a Volunteer and serving child(ren) for the duration of their involvement in the program.

I understand and agree to complete 12 hours of Continuing Education a year.

I understand and agree to the roles and responsibilities as a Volunteer.

I understand and agree to the Transportation policy and procedure.

I understand and agree to the Confidentiality policy and procedure.

I understand and agree to the Social Media policy and procedure.

I understand and agree to the Conflict of Interest policy and procedure.

I do not have a conflict of interest that I need to disclose to Advocates for Children CASA.

I am aware I need to comply with all the policies and procedures in this Handbook, or it may result in a review of my ability to continue in my role as a Volunteer.

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*Printed Name of Volunteer*

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*Signature of Volunteer*

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*Date*

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*Signature of CASA Staff*

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*Date*



## Statement of Commitment

I do hereby agree to faithfully perform all the duties of an Advocates for Children CASA Volunteer, to familiarize myself with all policies, procedures, and ethical standards (principles), and to function in accordance thereto.

I understand that my service as a Volunteer is under the supervision of Advocates for Children CASA. If at any time my performance should fail to meet the standards of the organization, I may not be allowed to continue as a Volunteer.

I have informed Advocates for Children CASA of any child abuse incidents or investigations and any arrests, legal charges, and/or convictions that I have had at any point in the past.

**In service as a Volunteer, I agree to the following and will work for the best interest of children by:**

- Taking my volunteer responsibility seriously,
- Openly communicating with the Advocates for Children CASA staff and any other professionals involved with the case, especially regarding difficulties that may arise,
- Being consistent and caring for the child(ren) who are assigned to me,
- Actively providing guidance and resources, as needed for my volunteer role,
- Actively seeking information through interviews and record reading, as needed for my volunteer role,
- Attending events with the child(ren) who are assigned to me,
- Attending meetings and hearings or requesting the CASA Staff attend in my place, as my volunteer role requires,
- Keeping accurate records in Optima,
- Preparing written reports, as needed for my volunteer role,
- Working with the CASA Staff to prepare court reports prior to hearings, as needed for my volunteer role, and
- Reporting any suspicion or evidence of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services caseworker. If the caseworker is not available, I will contact in this order: caseworker's supervisor; Department of Human Services Hotline at 1-844-CO-4kids; 911.

**I further agree to:**

Treat all people with respect in their roles, their opinions, and their cultures,

Abide by the rules of confidentiality at all times,

- I have read and signed the Confidentiality form.

Commit to a service period of 18 months,

- I understand the service period is determined by my specified volunteer role, and such service will require an average of 10-15 hours per month.
- If I must leave the Advocates for Children CASA program, I understand that my case will likely not be reassigned to another Volunteer.

Submit documentation in Optima of completion of 12 in-service/continuing education credentials per calendar year,

- This credit number will be prorated the first year based on swearing-in date.
- Units can be acquired through opportunities provided by Advocates for Children CASA or through other community agencies offering seminars or workshops covering topics related to my work as a Volunteer.
- I will check with the staff regarding applicable classes.

Transport children only in accordance with Advocates for Children CASA policy,

- Volunteers must have a current driver's license and proof of insurance with him/her, and a copy of each must be on file with Advocates for Children CASA,
- No transporting overnight or out of the area *[Any questions regarding exceptions to this rule must be discussed with CASA Staff.]*,
- Caution should be used in taking medications while driving, and
- Volunteers are responsible for being in compliance with all driving laws.

Provide CASA Staff with copies of current driver's license and automobile insurance,

Take advantage of staff support,

Avoid overnight visits with children,

- Overnight visits with youth will not be tolerated. Overnight visits will result in the immediate termination of your volunteer status.

**Termination of Volunteer status:**

I understand that Volunteer training and my first assignment are provisional processes, and if CASA Staff concludes that this is not a good fit, I may be asked to leave the program. I understand that Advocates for Children CASA reserves the right to terminate my status as a Volunteer at any time if concerns arise or I fail to adhere to policies and procedures. I also understand that if I am asked to leave the program, continuing to represent myself as an Advocates for Children CASA Volunteer could lead to criminal charges.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of Volunteer*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Volunteer*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of CASA Staff*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Statement of Commitment

## Insurance Advisement

I acknowledge that I have received the following notice:

### **AUTOMOBILE/TRANSPORTING CHILDREN**

- Since the vehicle is not owned by Advocates for Children CASA, my automobile policy will be called upon first to pay any claims. As stated in the Policies and Procedures, I have already committed to maintaining a driver's license, carrying at least the minimum Colorado required automobile insurance and immediately informing Advocates for Children CASA of any changes in my license status, insurance coverage and/or carrier.
- Advocates for Children CASA maintains non-owned/hired auto liability insurance coverage to provide **secondary** protection for liability, including legal defense – but there are restrictions, including intentional vs. unintentional acts and specific policy language not detailed in this summary, that will be the determinant of coverage.
- ***I will immediately notify Advocates for Children CASA of any accident or other incident while transporting children.***
- The child(ren) is(are) ultimately in the custody of Human Services, a parent or a foster parent who should provide health coverage if there are medical costs due to a car accident during the time said child(ren) is(are) guests of the Volunteer. However, fault may be investigated, and I agree to carry insurance in compliance with the laws of the State of Colorado, including bodily injury liability.

### **OTHER LIABILITY ISSUES**

- While performing volunteer responsibilities within the scope of outlined policies and procedures, if I am accused of negligence or fault, Advocates for Children CASA's policy will cover legal defense, liability, and medical payments, although there are restrictions, and specific policy language will determine coverage.
- ***I will immediately notify Advocates for Children CASA of any accusation(s) before taking further action. Legal defense is arranged through Advocates for Children CASA's insurance carrier.***



- Per National CASA standards and recommended limits, Advocates for Children CASA has Improper Sexual Conduct liability coverage in response to allegations of sexual abuse (not sexual harassment). However, the insurance does not apply for the benefit of an individual insured who intentionally caused the bodily injury alleged or is convicted of a criminal offense as a result of “improper sexual conduct.” No person is an insured for any improper sexual conduct that results in criminal conviction of that person. Again, policy language will ultimately determine coverage and ***I will immediately notify Advocates for Children CASA of any incident or accusation before taking further action.***
- A Volunteer should have immunity from liability for performing their role in a responsible manner according to the Volunteer Service Immunity Act (copy attached).
- The child(ren) is(are) ultimately in the custody of Human Services, a parent or a foster parent, who should provide health coverage if there are medical problems during the time said child(ren) is(are) guests of the Volunteer.
- I understand Advocates for Children CASA does not provide worker’s compensation benefits or medical payment coverage in the event I am injured during the course of volunteer activities with Advocates for Children CASA. By volunteering, I understand that I take on the risk willingly, and that my own health or accident insurance would provide coverage.

I understand that the above notice is a summary of coverage provided by Advocates for Children CASA and in no way supersedes the specific language, limitations and allowed coverage set forth in its insurance policy.

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*Printed Name of Volunteer*

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*Signature of Volunteer*

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*Date*

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*Signature of CASA Staff*

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*Date*

