



CASA Recommended Book List

These books are recommended to enhance your knowledge and understanding of topics related to your volunteer work. These are only suggestions. We encourage you to seek out any book that relates to this work and possibly your CASA case. You will accrue **one CE credit for every 100 pages read and once you enter your book summary in Optima.**

1. **"What Happened to You"**

2021 Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Bruce Perry—An in-depth look into trauma and the way that it can affect the brain AND the shift that can happen when we ask, "what happened to you?" rather than "what is wrong with you?". Highly recommended by numerous volunteers.

2. **"Evicted"**

2016 by Matthew Desmond, Pulitzer Prize winner for General Non-Fiction. Set in the poorest area of Milwaukee, the author follows eight families during the economic crisis of 2007-2008 as they struggled to pay their rent and the cycle of poverty that put barriers up along the way.

3. **"The Invisible Child"**

2021 by Andrew Elliot-- This is an astonishing story about the power of resilience, the importance of family, and the cost of inequality, told through the crucible of one remarkable girl. This book illuminates the themes of poverty, homelessness, racism, addiction and hunger and how these challenges shape the lives of one girl and her family.



4. **"Demon Copperhead" ****

2023 by Barbara Kingslover--This story follows a boy named Damon "Demon" Fields, born on a trailer floor to a teenage mother struggling with substance abuse. Armed with copper-colored hair, a sharp wit, and a fierce will to survive, Demon navigates a harrowing childhood through the foster care system, child labor, underfunded schools, and the crushing wave of the opioid epidemic.

5. **"Against All Odds" ****

2025 by Tristian Smith—Raised in the foster care system, he navigated over 25 foster homes, attending 13 different schools across four cities, and has used those experiences as a driving force to inspire others. His memoir chronicles this extraordinary journey, offering a heartfelt look at surviving loss, abuse, and uncertainty, while finding purpose and strength in the most challenging of circumstances.

6. **"A Place Called Home" ****

2022 by David Ambroz—A galvanizing, stirring memoir about growing up homeless and in foster care to become a leading advocate for child welfare. David was the speaker at our Rally for Kids lunch in April 2023.

7. **"The Newcomers"**

2017 by Helen Thorpe—An account of refugee teenagers at a Denver High School.

8. **"The Lost Boy"**

1997 by Dave Pelzer—A heartbreaking and inspiring memoir about surviving the foster care system after escaping severe childhood abuse.



9. **"Another Place at the Table"**

2003 by Kathy Harrison—A frank, first-person account of Harrison's 13 years as a foster mother in Massachusetts, balancing her own three biological sons, two adopted daughters, and a shifting rotation of traumatized children.

10. **"The Glass Castle"**

2005 by Jeannette Walls—A memoir about her unconventional, impoverished, and deeply dysfunctional upbringing.

***I have copies of these books in my office that you are welcome to borrow. Please email Monica Paddock at monica_paddock@adv4children.org, first come first served 😊*

CASA Recommended Podcast List

1. Fostering the Future Podcast—a weekly show hosted by child welfare veterans Jack, Cat, and team members who discuss foster care, dependency, adoption and child welfare
2. FAB Untold Stories—**Foster Care, Adoption, and Beyond: Untold Stories** is a podcast hosted by Dr. Zayda Sorrell Medina that explores the realities of the foster care system, adoption and youth homelessness
3. Last Day—An emotional and deeply reported documentary-style series that examines the broader American opioid and addiction crisis by tracing the final days of victims, and examining how systemic failures, childhood traumas, and societal stigma worsen the epidemic



4. CASA on the Go: Continuing Education for CASA Volunteers
5. The Forgotten Podcast—The Forgotten Podcast gives voice to members of the foster care community

CASA Recommended Movie/Documentary/TV List

1. Maid—2021 TV Series about a single mother who turns to housecleaning to make ends meet as she escapes an abusive relationship and overcomes homelessness to create a better life for her daughter, Maddie. **Entire Series=3 hours of CE Credit**
2. 6 Balloons—2018 Netflix, A loyal sister struggles to stay afloat while driving her heroin-addicted brother to a detox center and looking after his 2-year-old daughter. **Film = 1.25 CE Credits**
3. All Rise: For the Good of the Children—2017 Internet, an in-depth look into a trauma-informed courtroom in East Texas who are working to heal families in the child welfare system. **Film = 1.5 CE Credits**
4. Black, White & US—2019 IMDb, a documentary that explores racism in America through the lives of four white families who adopt African American children and must come to terms with their inherent biases. **Documentary = 1.25 CE Credits**
5. The Florida Project—2017 Tubu, a film that follows 6yo Moonee, who creates her own adventures with her friends while living in a beaten-up motel with her mother. With the help of a kind hotel manager and her fierce positivity, Moonee tries to dodge the harsh reality surrounding her. **Film = 1.75 CE Credits**



6. Foster—2018 Prime Video, a film that goes behind stereotypes and headlines to dispel some of the most enduring myths about foster care and those involved in the system. **Film = 1.75 CE Credits**
7. Gimme Shelter—2014 IMDb, based on a true story that centers 16yo Agnes “Apple” Bailey, this film uncovers the struggle for survival and the hope of redemption through the harsh realities of life on the streets. **Film =1.75 CE Credits**
8. First Match—2018 Netflix, hardened by years in foster care, a teenage girl from Brooklyn’s Brownsville neighborhood decided that joining the all-boys wrestling team is the only way back to her estranges father. **Film = 1.75 CE Credits**
9. Finding the Way Home—2019 HBO, a look at the distressing circumstances for millions of children living in orphanages and other institutions around the world as J.K. Rowling’s LUMOS foundation works to reunite them with family members or place them in foster homes. **Film = 1 CE Credit**
10. Long Bright River—2025 Peacock Miniseries, Mickey Fitzpatrick is a police officer who patrols a Philadelphia neighborhood hard-hit by the opioid crisis. With an empathetic vision of those struggling with addiction and their families, Mickey’s journey illustrates the collective power of an underserved community and, through several unexpected twists, subverts expectations around whom society perceives as heroes and villains. **Entire Miniseries= 4 CE Credits**



CASA Continuing Education FAQs

1. What is Continuing Education, and what requirements do I need to fulfill?

The purpose of continuing education is to ensure that volunteers stay educated and informed on issues within the realm of child welfare/advocacy. All CASA volunteers must complete and document 12 hours of CE every fiscal year.

2. When do my Continuing Education hours begin?

National CASA requires that all volunteers complete a minimum of 12 hours of ongoing training from **July 1–June 30**. This can be broken down into 1 hour per month, for twelve months, or can be completed in chunks throughout the year. The number of in-service (CE) training hours required for newly trained/sworn in volunteers will be adjusted (or prorated) dependent on the time of year the volunteer graduates from new volunteer training.

3. What counts towards Continuing Education hours?

Books, movies, documentaries, TV series, podcasts, webinars, in-person conferences/seminars related to the child welfare system can qualify for CE credits. Topics can include abuse, adoption, advocacy, cultural competency/diversity, education, foster care, neglect, mental health, trauma, working with older youth, substance use, homelessness/poverty, domestic violence, LGBTQ+IA populations, and many more. We encourage you to seek content that relates to your personal case when possible.

4. Where can I find Continuing Education training opportunities?

You can find recommendations on our webpage at www.adv4children.org/continuing-education/ Please be sure to check your email for our monthly newsletter from Advocates for Children CASA or correspondence from your case coordinator for updated in-service trainings and events that may be happening soon, i.e., Book Club or Lunch & Learns.



5. How do I show that I completed by Continuing Education hours?

All continuing education hours must be entered into Optima. Simply click the “training” tab and you will be able to add an “In-Service Training” (continuing education) log. You will use this log entry as an opportunity to share a short, reflective response. Providing verification of your Continuing Education hours is required by National CASA. Entering your hours in Optima will allow us to show

current donors as well as auditors that our volunteers are compliant. Your Optima reflection should include:

- Summary of main points
- Description of how this might help you in your role as a volunteer
- Examples of how your chosen CE content might apply to your current or future CASA case
- Would you recommend that other volunteers watch this? Why or why not?

6. How much credit will be given per Continuing Education opportunity?

Books: 100 pages = 1 hour of continuing education (attending our quarterly CASA book club in person will increase your CE hours. Ask your coordinator for more details.)

Movies/TV/Documentaries: 1 hour of video = 1 hour of continuing education

Podcasts: 1 hour of a podcast = 1 hour of continuing education

In-Service Trainings: 1 hour presentation = 1 hour of continuing education

7. If I complete more than 12 hours of CE credits, can they be “rolled over” for the following fiscal year?

No. According to National CASA Standard 7.C.2 “the training consists of at least 30 hours of required pre-service training and 12 hours of required in-service training per year.”



8. What happens if I don't complete my 12 hours of Continuing Education?

Without the completion of 1 hour per month for 12 hours of continuing education every fiscal year, volunteers are out of compliance with National CASA standards, and Advocates for Children CASA volunteer requirements. If hours are not completed, the Program and Executive Director can recommend termination from your case, and the program.

9. If I have questions about Continuing Education, who should I contact?

Please contact the Volunteer Recruitment & Training Coordinator, Monica Paddock, at Monica_Paddock@adv4children.org