



*The role of the CASA is to ensure that the child's voice is heard and considered, and that relevant evidence about the child's best interest with regard to safety and well-being is provided to all members of the child welfare system who make decisions about the child.*

**MY CHILD'S TEAM:**

**CASA Volunteer:**

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**Caseworker:**

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**GAL (child's attorney):**

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**Deputy Juvenile Officer:**

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United Way  
of Central Missouri

# A Parent's Guide to CASA



# A Parent's Guide to Understanding CASA

***What does CASA mean?*** Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are volunteers who advocate for the best interest of your child. They are appointed by a judge to obtain information that will help the judge make the best decisions about your child's future.

***How does a CASA volunteer help?*** A CASA volunteer gathers information about your child and works with the team assigned to your child's case. The CASA typically works with no more than one or two cases at a time. They are able to focus attention on the individual needs of your child.

***What does a CASA volunteer need from me?*** The CASA volunteer needs your cooperation when they communicate with you (either face-to-face or by phone or email) so they can better understand the circumstances of your child and your family.

***Is the CASA an advocate for me as well?*** No. A CASA serves as an advocate for your child only. Your input, however, is important and appreciated.

***What official standing does a CASA have?*** The CASA is an officer of the court for your child's case. They have access to your child and confidential information about your child's circumstances by written court order of the juvenile court.

***How much does the judge rely on the CASA volunteer's recommendations?*** The judge values the independent assessment of the CASA and pays close attention to their well-prepared recommendations .

***Who has access to CASA reports and how is my confidentiality protected?*** CASAs are bound by laws of confidentiality. This means that they will not share information with their own family, friends, etc. However, CASAs will share important information with parties in the case (judge, caseworker, lawyers) when doing so would further the best interest of your child.

***Why does my child need a CASA?*** When children are removed from their homes, they become part of the complex child welfare system. Children are placed in foster care for safety and to stabilize their lives, but they need to find a permanent home as soon as possible. A CASA makes an independent assessment about your child's circumstances by spending time with your child and coordinating with social workers, lawyers, schools, mental health professionals, foster parents, and others involved with your child. By independently gathering information and making recommendations to the judge, they will help your child find a permanent, safe, and loving home more quickly.

***Your children will become who you are, so be who you want them to be.***