



What is CASA for Children?

Every day in this country, 1,900 children become victims of abuse or neglect, **and four of them will die. Every day.** In Alabama a child is abused every 61 minutes. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children is a network of 933 community-based programs that recruit, train and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. Volunteer advocates—empowered directly by the courts—offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child’s rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care.

Volunteers stay with children until they are placed in loving permanent homes. For many abused children, a CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Since its creation by a family court judge in Seattle, Court Appointed Special Advocates has become one of the most effective programs of its kind. Today there are 13 programs across the state of Alabama and 1,000 CASA programs around the country. It is a unique blend of private support, public need and the kind of people power that comes from 300 volunteers in Alabama and 70,000 volunteers across the country all committed to the rights of every child in the foster care and child welfare system.

Key Outcomes for the CASA Model

A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to find a safe, permanent home:

- More likely to be adopted (8, 9, 10, 11, 14)
- Half as likely to re-enter foster care (8, 11, 14)
- Substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care (14)
- More likely to have a plan for permanency, especially children of color (17)

Children with CASA volunteers get more help while in the system...

- More services are ordered for the children (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14)



... and are more likely to have a consistent, responsible adult presence. (1, 2, 12)

- Volunteers spend significantly more time with the child than a paid guardian ad litem. (2)

Children with CASA volunteers spend less time in foster care... (15, 16)

- “It is quite remarkable that children without CASA involvement are spending an average of over eight months longer in care, compared to children having CASA involvement.” (15)

... and are less likely to be bounced home to home. (13, 15, 16)

- CASA volunteers improve representation of children. (18)
- Reduce the time needed by lawyers (12)
- More likely than paid lawyers to file written reports (3, 4, 5)
- For each of 9 duties, judges rated CASA/GAL volunteers more highly than attorneys (12)
- Highly effective in having their recommendations adopted by the court (1)

Children with CASA volunteers do better in school... (13)

- More likely to pass all courses
- Less likely to have poor conduct in school
- Less likely to be expelled

... and score better on nine protective factors (13)

- Neighborhood resources, interested adults, sense of acceptance, controls against deviant behavior, models of conventional behavior, positive attitude towards the future, valuing achievement, ability to work with others and ability to work out conflicts.

We currently have CASA programs in the following Counties in Alabama:

- Blount
- Dallas
- Madison (Court Appointed Juvenile Advocates or CAJA)
- Marshall (Court Appointed Juvenile Advocates or CAJA)
- Mobile



- Jefferson
- Shelby
- Cullman
- Morgan, Lawrence and Limestone Counties under the North Alabama CASA program
- Lee
- St. Clair, Talladega and Calhoun Counties under the Tri-County CASA program
- Colbert and Lauderdale under the Shoals CASA Program

Links and contact information:

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Alabama CASA Video link: <http://youtu.be/YcvBvocLaVI>

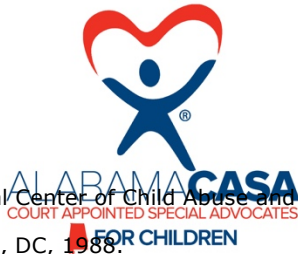
Websites:

Alabama CASA: www.alabamacasa.org

National CASA: www.casaforchildren.org

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