CASA Program:
Advocate Policy and Procedure Manual

A program of the Iowa Child Advocacy Board

https://childadvocacy.iowa.gov

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The purpose of these policies and procedures is to provide overall guidance and direction to individuals serving as advocates for the Iowa CASA Program. They do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The Iowa CASA Program reserves the right to change any of these policies and procedures at any time and expect adherence to the changed policy. Areas specifically not addressed by these policies and procedures shall be determined by the Coordinator in consultation with the Administrator and/or Deputy Administrator. All Advocates will be required to sign an acknowledgement indicating that s(he) has received, read, understands and will comply with all the policies and procedures. Advocates will be notified, in writing, of any changes made to this manual.

Under particular circumstances, certain exceptions may be made to the policies and procedures of this program. Such exceptions will be made at the discretion of the Coordinator in consultation with the Administrator and/or Deputy Administrator.

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Section 1: Program Overview

This section provides an overview of the Iowa CASA Program as it relates to the mission, purpose, governance, and affiliations.

A. Mission and Purpose of Iowa CASA Program

1. The Iowa Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program commissions trained and qualified community advocates to serve as an effective voice in court for abused and neglected children, strengthening efforts to ensure that each child is living in a safe, permanent and nurturing home.

2. The Iowa CASA program recognizes the importance of advocating for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the court system. The goal of the Iowa CASA program is continued development and expansion of an active CASA program (advocates recruited, screened, trained, and assigned to cases, with supervision and program assistance available) in all of Iowa. The Iowa Program has been granted the legal authority to operate in all of Iowa's 99 counties.

3. The child population served by the Iowa CASA program is clearly defined as children from birth to 18 years of age who have been adjudicated a child in need of assistance (CINA). The Iowa CASA program accepts court-referred cases that meet the definition of child in need of assistance (CINA), per Iowa Code Section 232.2. The CASA program serves any child for whom the court appoints a court appointed special advocate. The court may appoint an advocate to represent the interests of a child in any judicial proceeding to which the child is a party or is called as a witness or relating to any dispositional order involving the child resulting from the proceeding. The court may appoint an advocate in a delinquency, child in need of assistance or family in need of assistance proceeding. If the plan for the child's transition from foster care to adulthood identifies services or other support needed to assist the child when the child becomes an adult and the court deems it beneficial to the child, the court may authorize the court appointed special advocate to continue a relationship with and provide advice to the child for a period of time beyond the child's eighteen birthday.

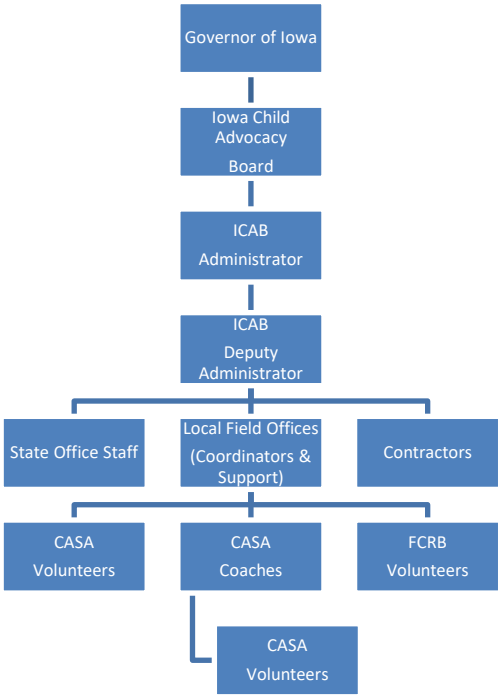
4. The Iowa CASA program solely provides trained and qualified community individuals to advocate for the best interests of children who come before the court as a direct result of abuse or neglect as defined by the state child welfare laws. All Iowa CASA advocates must submit an application, provide three personal references, complete a personal interview with CASA staff, pass background checks, completed thirty (30) hours of pre-service training and take an Oath of Confidentiality with a Judge before being appointed to a case.

B. Program Governance

1. Iowa Child Advocacy Board
   a. The board is a nine member volunteer board appointed by the Governor. The Board provides oversight to both the Court Appointed Special Advocate program and the Foster Care Review Board program. The Iowa Child Advocacy Board Administrator is hired by the State Board and reports directly to the Board regarding agency decisions and governance. The Board works to ensure that Iowa's abused and

neglected children and all foster children are well cared for and that the system designed to meet their needs is doing so in the most effective manner possible. One method of tracking data for the children served by the CASA program is the Iowa Child Advocacy Board's web-based data system.

b. The Board is responsible for making recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, Supreme Court, Chief Judge of each judicial district, Department of Human Services (DHS), and child-placing agencies on ways to improve the delivery of foster care services. Members also submit recommendations on how to remove barriers that prevent the delivery of top-quality foster care, as well as services to abused and neglected children.



2. Administrator's responsibilities, operating out of the State Office, include the following for the CASA Program:
   a. Regularly collect, organize and report budgetary, programmatic and systemic information and recommendations to the State Board to assist it to carry out its statutory duties, which include the establishment and administration of Iowa's CASA program and the delivery of reports and recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, Court and others. Assist the Board as directed in all matters related to its meetings, deliberations and decisions.
   b. In consultation with ICAB staff, stakeholders and organizations involved in the child welfare system, develop operational plans to implement the strategies established by the Board.
   c. Review or modify changes in operations, staffing assignments, information management system functions, CASA program policies and related matters as needed or as requested or proposed by local program staff, state office management team or CASA program's steering committee; establish and monitor functional work activities and organizational relationships to meet statutory and program funding requirements and achieve ICAB goals and objectives.

d. Provide direct supervision to CASA staff in coordination with the Deputy Administrator. In cooperation with the Department of Inspections and Appeals, approve and assure appropriate personnel actions for all ICAB employees related to selection, performance, leaves of absence, grievances, work schedules and assignments and disciplinary procedures; and, administer personnel and related policies and procedures.
e. Provide policies, direction and consultation to Coordinators to assure their appropriate recruitment, screening, training, supervision and support of all ICAB program advocates. Accept or reject requests for policy exceptions to advocate eligibility conditions based on background check findings. Exercise authority to intervene and resolve ICAB staff disputes, disciplinary actions or other concerns with advocates as needed to assure staff and advocate compliance with ICAB program policies.
f. Develop and maintain effective working relationships and carry out planning and advocacy activities with a broad spectrum of key officials and organizations to generate executive, legislative and related support for budget requests and management decisions on ICAB priorities/goals. Represent ICAB on statutory committees and other national, state, local child welfare initiatives and partnerships. Identify and carry out initiatives that promote ICAB programs and their volunteer opportunities to targeted audiences and the general public.
g. Prepare, or approve, and provide required reports and responses to requests for information from the Governor's Office, General Assembly, Court, funding sources, ICAB program interested parties and others.

3. Deputy Administrator's responsibilities, operating out of the State Office, include the following for the CASA program:
   a. Provide direct supervision to CASA staff in coordination with the Administrator. Assure appropriate personnel actions for CASA employees related to performance, leaves of absence, grievances, work schedules and assignments and disciplinary procedures; and, administer personnel and related policies and procedures. For new hires, arrange for initial training and mentoring, and create performance plan. Initiate and complete timely performance evaluations for designated staff.
   b. In consultation with Administrator and ICAB staff, direct and oversee the development of specific plans to carry out program operations.
   c. Recommend and assist the implementation of approved changes in operations, staffing assignments, information management system functions, and other CASA program policies and related matters as needed or as requested or proposed by field staff, state office management team or steering committee.
   d. Regularly collect, organize and report statistical information for the CASA program. Analyze information and seek to maximize the effectiveness of the programs for both individual staff contributors and the agency as a whole. Provide consultation and support for field staff in the execution of their assigned duties.
   e. Provide policies, direction and consultation to local program coordinators to assure their appropriate recruitment, screening, training, supervision and support of all ICAB program advocates. Exercise management authority to intervene and resolve ICAB staff disputes, disciplinary actions or other concerns with advocates as needed to assure staff and advocate compliance with ICAB program policies.
   f. Develop and maintain effective working relationships and carry out planning and advocacy activities with a broad spectrum of key officials to support management decisions on ICAB priorities/goals.

g. Organize the NCASAA annual report for the agency by coordinating the data collection of the Coordinators and providing state-level data within established time frames.

4. Program Coordinator's responsibilities, operating out of a specific cluster of counties, are as follows:
   a. Meet with Judges, DHS, county attorneys, attorneys and service providers to educate them about the CASA program. Maintain ongoing contact with these professionals to enhance your working relationship and problem solve with those individuals and agencies as needed.
   b. Increase public awareness of the CASA Program through public speaking to community groups and organizations.
   c. Handle local media responsibilities as needed for recruitment and/or public awareness about the program.
   d. CASA Management as outlined in Section 5 of the staff CASA Policies and Procedures Manual.
   e. Record keeping as outlined in Section 6 of the staff CASA Policies and Procedures Manual.
   f. Perform other responsibilities to include: maintain contact with Administrator and Deputy Administrator for program updates; attend program staff meetings as scheduled; other duties as determined by the Administrator to be in the best interest of the local program.

5. Role of a CASA Coach
   a. Provide support and coaching for 5-10 advocates in their work with children which includes but is not limited to:
      i. Case assignments and verification of an advocate's acceptance of the case.
      ii. Review initial case file information with the advocate and assist in the development of the advocate's action plan for the case.
      iii. Track court hearings and confirm the advocate's attendance.
      iv. Maintain monthly contact with advocates to obtain case updates and address issues as needed.
      v. Remind advocates to keep up-to-date contact log entries, training hours, and timely submission of hours/miles and court reports.
      vi. Review and edit advocate's reports. Submit reports to the CASA Coordinator for final review and distribution prior to each court hearing.
      vii. Be available to advocates for assistance with cases and to attend court hearings with an advocate or on his/her behalf if needed. If unavailable, schedule coverage by contacting the CASA Coordinator.
   b. Maintain communication with the CASA Coordinator a minimum of once a month to discuss cases, progress, issues or critical events that occur in a case.
   c. Professional Development
      i. Be knowledgeable of the CASA Policies and Procedures for the program, advocates and coaches.
      ii. Attend required training and educational opportunities to enhance skills.

6. Role of the CASA Advocate
   Upon completion of pre-service training requirements, a CASA Advocate will be assigned to a case and fulfill the following responsibilities:

a. Investigation: The CASA Advocate carries out an objective examination of the situation, including relevant history, environment, relationships, and needs of the child.
b. Facilitation: The CASA Advocate identifies resources and services for the child and facilitates a collaborative relationship between all parties involved in the case, helping to create a situation in which the child's needs can be met.
c. Advocacy: The CASA Advocate speaks up for the child by making recommendations at each court hearing regarding the child's best interests.
d. Monitoring: The CASA Advocate monitors whether the orders of the court and the plans of the child protective services agency are carried out, and reports to the court or collaborates with the child protective services agency when any of the parties do not follow those orders and plans.

C. State Affiliation

1. The Iowa CASA programs comply with all state law, regulations and administrative and court rules.

2. The Iowa CASA programs take advantage of services available from the state office which may include:
   a. Technical assistance
   b. Resource materials
   c. All-staff meetings
   d. Training opportunities
   e. Web resources

D. National Affiliation

1. The CASA Program takes advantage of the services available from National CASA which include:
   a. Technical assistance
   b. Resource materials
   c. National conference
   d. Training opportunities

2. When using National CASA trademarks including taglines, slogans, and logos, the CASA program adheres to National CASA graphic standards.

3. The CASA program uses the name CASA, GAL or identifies itself as a member of the National CASA Association on all promotional, public relations and recruitment materials.

4. The Iowa CASA Program and its individual Program sites are members of the National CASA Association, and as such, are bound by the following standards:

Standard 1:	Program Mission and Purpose
Standard 2:	Ethical Conduct
Standard 3:	Inclusiveness and Diversity
Standard 4:	Disproportionality
Standard 5:	Program Governance
Standard 6:	Human Resources Management
Standard 7:	Volunteer Management
Standard 8:	Public Relations
Standard 9:	Planning and Evaluation

Standard 10: Financial, Facility and Risk Management
Standard 11: Record Keeping
Standard 12: National Affiliation
Standard 13: State Affiliation
Standard 14: Program Development, Implementation and Expansion

A complete copy of the National CASA Association Local Standards may be obtained by contacting the local CASA office in your area or accessing it from www.casaforchildren.org .

Section 2: Ethical Conduct

This Code of Ethics provides advocates and the staff of the Iowa CASA program with guidelines for professional behavior and ethical conduct. Advocates and staff will abide by this Code of Ethics and all laws and regulations governing their activities.

A. Conduct:

1. Employees, CASA coaches and advocates will uphold the credibility and dignity of the CASA concept by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional and humane manner.

2. Employees, CASA Coaches and Advocates will refrain from the use of alcohol or substances while conducting CASA-related work.

3. Employees, CASA coaches and advocates will use their authority appropriately. Employees, CASA coaches and advocates will not condone any illegal action or unethical practice related to the program or community or participate in harassing behavior towards children, their families or other case parties. Employees, advocates and governing body members must immediately notify the CASA program of any criminal charges filed against them.

4. Employees, CASA coaches and advocates will uphold the CASA Program through their actions. Those involved with CASA will appropriately use good/materials and will make every effort to secure confidential information they obtain through their position with CASA.

5. Employees and advocates shall not engage in any activity that might create a conflict of interest for CASA or for themselves individually.
   a. If a possible conflict of interest arises at the management level, the Administrator shall report to the State Board in writing that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested party was not present and did not participate in discussion, deliberation or decision on the matter.
   b. If any party does not disclose a potential conflict of interest prior to becoming involved in a transaction or decision effected by the conflict, appropriate discipline or dismissal will be implemented.
   c. See Section 5: CASA Management for conflict of interest policy regarding advocates.

6. The CASA program will serve and respond to requests without bias because of race, religion, sex, gender, national origin or handicap.

B. Confidentiality Policy:

1. Case file information
   a. The CASA program staff and advocates will respect the right to privacy of all individuals and will keep information about CASA cases confidential. Staff and advocates shall adhere to the confidentiality of records provisions pursuant to Iowa Code §217.30. Violation of this section shall constitute a serious misdemeanor.
   b. Pursuant to Iowa Code §235A.15 and §235A.17, staff and advocates shall maintain all information received from the child abuse registry or assessment report as confidential and shall not disseminate such information except when the re-dissemination is in connection with official duties, and the person receiving the information would have independent access to the same information under §235A.15.

2. Gathering case information
   a. Iowa Code §232.2 (22.a.), Unless otherwise enlarged or circumscribed by a court or juvenile court having jurisdiction over the child or by operation of law, the duties of a guardian ad litem, and thereby court appointed special advocate, with respect to a child shall include the following:
      i. Conducting in-person interviews with the child, if the child's age is appropriate for the interview, and interviewing each parent, guardian, or other person having custody of the child, if authorized by counsel.
      ii. Conducting interviews with the child, if the child's age is appropriate for the interview, prior to any court-ordered hearing.
      iii. Visiting the home, residence, or both home and residence of the child and any prospective home or residence of the child, including each time placement is changed.
      iv. Interviewing any person providing medical, mental health, social, educational, or other services to the child, before any hearing referred to in subparagraph (2).
      v. Obtaining firsthand knowledge, if possible, of the facts, circumstances, and parties involved in the matter in which the person is appointed guardian ad litem.
      vi. Attending any hearings in the matter in which the person is appointed as the guardian ad litem.
      vii. If the child is required to have a transition plan developed in accordance with the child's case permanency plan and subject to review and approval of a transition committee under section 235.7, assisting the transition committee in development of the transition plan.
   b. The order appointing the CASA includes the following：“Upon presentation of this Order to any agency, hospital, organization, school, person or office, including the Clerk of Court, Department of Human Services, Juvenile Court Services and/or agencies providing services to families and children, public and private health care facilities, medical and mental health professionals including doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, counselors and staff and law enforcement agencies, the CASA and the CASA program staff are hereby authorized to interview any relevant person and inspect and copy any records relevant to the proceedings, including protected health information, if not prohibited by federal law. The CASA and program staff may interview, and are hereby authorized to receive verbal and written disclosure from

any person providing medical, mental health, social, educational, or other services to the child(ren), relating to the above named child(ren) without consent of the child(ren) or parents of the child(ren) pursuant to Iowa Code Sections 232.147(3), 237.21 and 235A.15(2)(d). The CASA and program staff may attend any departmental staff meeting, case conference, or meeting with medical or mental health providers, service providers, organizations, or educational institutions regarding the child(ren), if deemed necessary by the CASA or program staff and pursuant to 237.21(2)(a), a court appointed special advocate may attend family team decision-making meetings or youth transition decision-making meetings upon request by the family or child and disclose case-related observations and recommendations relating to a child or a child's family while attending the meetings"

3. Disclosing Information
   a. Iowa Code §237.21 (2)(a). A court appointed special advocate may attend family team decision-making meetings or youth transition decision-making meetings upon request by the family or child and disclose case-related observations and recommendations relating to a child or a child's family while attending the meetings.
   b. Iowa Code §237.21 (2)(b). A court appointed special advocate may disclose case-related observations and recommendations to the agency assigned by the court to supervise the case, to the county attorney, or to the child's legal representative or guardian ad litem.
   c. Agency in "a." refers to the Department of Human Service (DHS) or Juvenile Court Services (JCS).
   d. When CASA staff, advocates and/or coaches are included in group emails with case specific information, subsection (2)(b) prohibits the staff, advocate or coach from replying to all recipients in the group email. Disclosing case-related observations and recommendations can only be made to DHS/JCS, the county attorney or to the child's legal representative or guardian ad litem.

4. CASA report dissemination
   a. Reports prepared by CASAs for submission to the court will be disseminated by the local CASA program only to anyone who is required to receive notice and be present at a hearing (DHS, juvenile court officer, county attorney, child's parent, child's guardian, child's legal custodian, child's attorney or guardian ad litem, intervener, parent's attorney, intervener's attorney), according to local protocol or as court ordered, prior to each scheduled court hearing. Foster Care Review Boards will also receive a copy of the CASA Report per Iowa Code §237.20 1a(1). No other dissemination of information by the CASA or CASA program is permitted.
   b. If a person is represented by counsel, providing the CASA report to that person's attorney is the same as providing it to the person and the parent's attorney should be sharing the report with their client.
   c. Intervener as referenced in "a" is any agency, facility, institution, or person including a foster parent or individual providing preadoptive care, who petitions the court and is made a party to the proceeding. (232.91)

5. Subpoenas. A subpoena is a writ, generally issued by a court, to compel testimony or evidence. The case records and information made available to CASA Advocates, Coaches, and staff is privileged and confidential per Iowa code. In the event that a subpoena is issued with regard to the CASA program:

a. Immediately bring the subpoena to the attention of the ICAB Administrator or Deputy Administrator, and provide a copy.

b. Do not respond to, contact or discuss the matter with the issuing/serving party without further guidance.

c. The ICAB program has legal counsel available to provide guidance to Advocates, Coaches, Local & Lead Coordinators and administration throughout the subpoena process. A motion to quash (make null and void) the subpoena will likely be filed on behalf of CASA. Should other steps be required, specific guidance will be provided.

6. Media and legislative contact
   a. Staff and advocates of the CASA program are **strictly prohibited** from commenting on any case to the media or legislators.
   b. Advocates cannot discuss information about their cases with the media or make arrangements for interviews of children or parents, regardless of their consent. The CASA program does not exploit children and families to receive media attention.
   c. If contacted by the media or a legislator regarding a case or CASA program, advocates shall contact program staff to determine the plan for responding. Advocates may participate in providing in the response if deemed appropriate by the coordinator. If the advocate is interviewed by the media or a legislator, the coordinator shall be present.

7. Use of technology
   a. Reasonable precautions must be taken to guard confidential issues in regard to the use of technology such as email, electronic and social media sites, computers, and cell phones. Electronic files and devices must be password protected.

C. Knowledge and Understanding:

1. Individuals working in the CASA program as staff or advocates must be trained in the operations of the court, child welfare systems, and in the dynamics of child abuse and neglect.

2. The CASA program, its staff and advocates must respect a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment that meets the child's best interest, first and foremost with a biological parent if the parent is able to provide a minimum sufficient level of care to the child.

Section 3: Professional Conduct

Ultimate responsibility for all CASA cases rests with the Coordinator. However, each CASA also represents the CASA program, and what a CASA says and does in the courtroom and in the community reflects on the program.

A. Gift Giving

1. CASAs cannot directly give money, gifts, clothes or other items to a CASA child/family.

B. Providing Direct Service

1. CASAs are restricted from providing direct services such as, but not limited to: intervening in domestic disputes, counseling, giving legal advice, offering to provide funds for necessities, taking CASA children or family members to the Advocate's home or place of employment. If needs are not being met, Advocates advocate for direct services to meet the needs.
2. The Iowa CASA program does not encourage transportation by CASA Advocates. If case circumstances warrant, transportation may be provided by a CASA Advocate when all of the following conditions have been met:
   a. Has passed a motor vehicles division record check.
   b. Has insurance coverage that meets or exceeds the required state minimum.
   c. Provides annually to the program a copy of a valid driver's license, a safe driving record and personal automobile insurance that meets required state minimum.
   d. Has a Transportation Consent on file for each case in which transportation will be provided that includes:
      1. Written permission of the Coordinator.
      2. Written permission of the child's custodian, legal guardian or custodial agency.
   e. Is knowledgeable of the potential risk of liability.
   f. Having reviewed this policy, chooses to accept the responsibility.
3. CASAs shall not provide direct service delivery to any party involved in the case as it could:
   a. Lead to conflict of interest or liability problems;
   b. Cause the child or family to become dependent on the CASA Advocate rather than working with community agencies and organizations.

C. Transportation Policy

Transportation by CASA Advocates in personal vehicles of children or other persons during the course of performing their duties and responsibilities is not mandatory. Advocates can still perform their duties without transporting a child; however, in certain circumstances an Advocate may choose to provide transportation for a CASA child or his/her family members if it is case-related. The need for transportation will be assessed by the Advocate and CASA Coordinator when developing the Advocate's initial action plan for the case.

When transporting CASA children, it is extremely important to consider their safety as well as the Advocate's own safety. If a CASA Advocate chooses to transport CASA children or their family members, the following guidelines shall be met:

1. Only CASA Advocates with valid driver's licenses, auto insurance coverage of 20/40/15 and who have passed a motor vehicles check are allowed to transport children and/or their family members.
   a. It is the responsibility of the Advocate to <u>annually</u> provide copies of a valid driver's license and proof of auto insurance coverage to the program staff.
   b. It is the responsibility of the Advocate to notify program staff if his/her driver's license is revoked or suspended at any time.
   c. It is the responsibility of the Advocate to notify program staff if his/her auto insurance coverage lapses at any time.
2. CASA Advocates must have a Transportation Consent on file for each case in which transportation will be provided that includes:
   a. Written permission of the Coordinator.

b. Written permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency.

3. CASA Advocates who have received three (3) or more traffic citations (moving or non-moving) in a year or who have been involved in three (3) or more vehicular accidents in the last twelve (12) months are prohibited from transporting CASA children or family members. It is the responsibility of the Advocate to inform staff of any accident they are involved in immediately following the incident.
4. CASA Advocates who have been drinking any alcoholic beverages, using illegal substances or taking any medication that may impair their ability to drive shall not transport any child.
5. CASA Advocates who have been convicted of DWI or DUI (Driving while intoxicated or Driving under the influence) within the last four (4) years shall not be permitted to transport a CASA child or family member. It is the responsibility of the CASA to inform staff of any DWI/DUI arrest that occurs after initial background checks.
6. CASA Advocates transporting a CASA child shall abide by all traffic laws.
7. CASA Advocates are responsible for the passengers in their vehicle. It is the CASA's responsibility to safely transport CASA children. Advocates are required to comply with state laws regarding safety and seatbelt requirements.

If circumstances permit or the above guidelines are not followed, the CASA Coordinator has discretion to revoke a CASA Advocate's privilege to transport a child and/or their family members at any time.

D. Public Speaking/Media

1. Staff and advocates of the CASA program are **strictly prohibited** from commenting on any case to the media or legislators.
2. Advocates cannot discuss information about their cases with the media or make arrangements for interviews of children or parents, regardless of their consent. The CASA program does not exploit children and families to receive media attention.
3. If contacted by the media or a legislator regarding a case or CASA program, advocates shall contact program staff to determine the plan for responding. Advocates may participate in providing in the response if deemed appropriate by the coordinator. If the advocate is interviewed by the media or a legislator, the coordinator shall be present.

E. Use of Social Media

1. Advocates must comply with the ICAB written social media policy. See Social Media Policy on page 19 of this manual.

F. Involvement with Legal/Welfare Systems

1. CASA Advocates must immediately notify the program if the Advocate is charged with or convicted of a criminal offense, or becomes involved in any other court proceeding which might cause a conflict of interest or adversely affect the Advocate's ability to effectively advocate for a child.
2. CASA Advocates must notify the program if s(he) becomes involved in a case with allegations of child abuse or neglect.

G. Conflict of Interest

1. A CASA Advocate's effectiveness and standing in court depend on maintaining professional relationships with children and families.
2. An Advocate does not engage in activities which could jeopardize the safety of the child, the integrity of the program, the objectivity of the Advocate, or activities which are likely

to result in a conflict of interest or expose the program or the Advocate to criminal or civil liability.

3. An Advocate cannot be related to any parties involved in the case or be employed in a position that might result in a conflict of interest.
4. An Advocate will not become personally involved with the child(ren) and family. This includes not developing intimate, social or other nonprofessional relationships with any person connected to the case.
5. If a conflict of interest is identified after case assignment (e.g. other parties become involved in the case that the Advocate may have a conflict of interest with, employment situations of parties or Advocate change that result in a conflict, the Advocate no longer maintains objectivity), then the Coordinator will submit a request to the Court asking for the CASA Advocate to be released.
6. If a CASA Advocate also serves on a Foster Care Review Board that reviews the Advocate's case, the Advocate will recuse him/herself from the board reviews and participate in the review process as an interested party.

H. Communication with Parties

1. CASA Advocates are prohibited from giving counseling, legal advice, misrepresenting the role or position of an Advocate.
2. CASA Advocates are prohibited from engaging in any ex parte conversation with a judge.

I. Confidentiality – see Section 2: Ethical Conduct

J. Duty to Disclose

1. A CASA Advocate has a duty to immediately disclose in instances where the Advocate suspect:
   a. Child abuse and/or neglect
   b. Someone involved in the case may harm her/himself or others.
2. Disclosure of child abuse and/or neglect is made by contacting the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-362-2178
3. Disclosure of concerns regarding an individual harming her/himself will be made to the Department of Human Services case manager and CASA Coordinator.

K. State Liability – Iowa Code 232.13

1. For purposes of chapter 669, the following persons shall be considered state employees:
   a. A child given a work assignment of value to the state or the public or a community work assignment under this chapter.
   b. A court appointed special advocate and the members of the child advocacy board created in section 237.16 or a local citizen foster care review board created in accordance with section 237.19.
2. The state of Iowa is exclusively liable for and shall pay any compensation becoming due a person under section 85.59.
3. Iowa Code 669 State Tort Claims can be viewed at: http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=IowaCode&input=669

Section 4: CASA Case Assignment

A. CASA Role and Responsibilities

1. The CASA program maintains a current manual of CASA policies and procedures and provides a copy to each CASA Advocate. The CASA Advocate provides signed acknowledgement of reading and understanding of all the policies contained in the CASA policies manual.
2. The CASA Advocate must complete all requirements of the application and background check process, 30 hours of pre-service training and take an Oath of Confidentiality with the local judge or designee. The CASA Advocate will be given a CASA identification badge and certificate at the time of appointment.
3. The CASA Advocate responsibilities include:
   a. Adhere to the confidentiality policies as outlined in the Advocate P&P Manual.
   b. Consult with the coach (or Coordinator if no coach is assigned) regarding the case to develop an Action Plan for the case which identifies goals, objectives and action steps for the advocate. A Notice of Acceptance/Confidentiality Agreement will be signed by the advocate, coach and/or coordinator which serves as the advocate's notice of acceptance for the case.
   c. At a minimum, the advocate shall meet in-person with the child(ren) once every 30 days.
      i. An exception may be granted at the discretion of the program staff; however, the decision to permit a less frequent in-person contact shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception. (Resource 30: Exception - In-Person Contact form)
      ii. In situations where the advocate requests mileage reimbursement for case-related activities, the request and circumstances must be taken to the ICAB Administrator for consultation and consideration for approval.
   d. Obtain and maintain firsthand understanding of the needs and situation of the child(ren) by conducting an ongoing review of all relevant documents and records and interviewing the child(ren), parents, DHS case manager, service providers, teachers and other pertinent persons to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation. As needed, advocates will request parental consent to release and obtain information from therapists, counselors or medical providers. (Resource 31: Health Related Consent Form and 32: Non-Health-Related Consent Form)
   e. A court appointed special advocate may attend family team decision-making meetings or youth transition decision-making meetings upon request by the family or child and disclose case-related observations and recommendations relating to a child or a child's family while attending the meetings.
   f. Identify needs and advocate for the best interest of the child(ren) to assure that the child(ren)'s needs are met.
   g. Identify needs and advocate for the best interest of the child(ren) to assure that the child(ren)'s needs are met.
   h. Facilitate cooperative solutions among parties when necessary
   i. Provide a written report (see Resource 33: CASA Report Template) for every hearing which includes observations and specific recommendations for the child, and when appropriate, the child's family. Significant case developments must be reported to the Coordinator for consideration of submitting an interim report between hearings. To meet National CASA Standard 7.E.5.d, a CASA report to court that includes findings

and recommendations is a requirement for every hearing regardless of whether or not a judge waives the submission of reports to court.

   i. If the advocate has been assigned to the case less than six weeks, the coordinator will talk with the advocate and coach to determine if the advocate has enough information to submit a relevant report to the court. Discretion shall be left to the local coordinator.
   ii. An advocate shall only include a photograph of the child in his/her report to court if written consent has been granted by the child's parent or legal guardian.
   iii. Use Resource 43. Photo Release Form; a copy shall be kept in the child's case record.

h. Appear at all hearings to advocate for the child's best interest and provide testimony when necessary. When the advocate is not able to attend a hearing, the advocate will provide the earliest possible notice to the coach to arrange for coverage at the hearing.
   i. Advocate will provide a written statement that includes observations since the report was submitted to the parties for the Coach or Coordinator to present at the hearing.
   ii. Advocate will provide a telephone number that (s)he can be reached at during the time of the hearing.
   iii. If absence is known in advance of submitting the report, a statement will be included in the CASA Report to Court in regard to the absence.

i. Determine if a permanency plan has been established for the child(ren) and make recommendations concerning permanency.
j. Monitor implementation of service plans and court orders assuring that court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner and that all hearings are held in accordance with the law.
k. Maintain at least once a month contact with the Coordinator for case conferences to review progress on the case.
l. Maintain complete data about the case, including appointments, interviews and information gathered.
m. Return case file and any documentation to the program staff within two weeks of case closure and delete any electronic records s(he) has stored.
n. Complete a feedback survey upon each case closure. Staff will send an online survey link to the advocate to complete.
o. Participate in case progress reviews 6 months after initial case assignment, annually thereafter and in the interim if requested by the Coordinator or coach.
p. Participate in 12 hours of additional in-service training per year. This is prorated for the CASA's first year dependent upon the month s(he) completes pre-service training. Included in the 12 hours of additional training is the required security awareness training which advocates will complete on an annual basis. Advocates may, if desired, complete this training by completing the 'Securing the Human' online course. If an advocate desires to receive security awareness training via Securing the Human, the Advocate must notify their coordinator so this can be scheduled.
q. Complete a Monthly Advocate Update form (Resource 44), to record case contacts, brief case update, hours and miles contributed for all case activities for the month and in-service training hours completed. Submit the Monthly Advocate Update form to the coach by deadlines as identified by local office protocols.
r. Report to Coordinator immediately any concerns for advocate personal safety and await instruction on how to proceed. If the Advocate has a coach, a contact will be made to the coach as a courtesy.

4. When one to one situations with the assigned child occur, reasonable and sensible precautions are taken by the advocate. A CASA Advocate will make every attempt to ensure the safety and security of the child during one to one situations.
    i. These situations have the potential to make a child more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust.
    ii. Adults working in one to one situations with a child may be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations made against them.
    iii. When scheduling a visit with a child, the CASA Advocate will talk to the caregiver beforehand, assessing the need to have someone else present or close by during the visit.
    iv. CASA Advocates will avoid meeting with a child in remote, secluded areas.
    v. CASA Advocates will report any situation to the Coordinator where a child becomes distressed or angry during a visit between the advocate and child.
    vi. CASA Advocates will carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child when having a one to one visit.
5. A CASA Advocate will not be assigned to more than two cases at a time. An exception may be granted at the discretion of the program staff; however, the decision to permit a higher caseload shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception. Under the exception, an advocate will not be assigned to more than five cases.
6. A CASA Advocate will adhere to the conflict of interest policy outlined in this manual.
7. A CASA Advocate will operate in accordance to the social media policies outlined in this manual.
8. Case closure ends the CASA advocate's and CASA coach's assignment to serve on behalf of the child. An advocate is allowed to continue a relationship with the child or family if the child (or guardian for a child under age 18) desires continued contact. The advocate must make known that they are no longer serving in an official role under the auspices of the CASA program. The advocate will incur all liability for activity related to continued relationships with children and families after official case closure.

~~8.~~9. Weapons Policy

Regardless of whether a volunteer possesses a non-professional concealed weapons permit, those volunteering for the CASA program may not possess a weapon at any time while conducting any work within the scope of CASA duties. This includes possession of firearms, electroshock weapons, knives, explosives and any chemical whose purpose is to cause harm to another person. Weapons may not be brought onto any property owned or leased by the Child Advocacy Board or brought to any property where an ICAB-sponsored event or training is taking place. Volunteers may not possess weapons on their person while conducting CASA work and may not possess a weapon in their personal vehicle if the vehicle is being used to transport any child, family member or any other case-related party to the case. Violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Advocates with a Peace Officer or Professional Weapons Permit (i.e. law enforcement officials or members of the military) are encouraged to conduct CASA-related business off work time. It is the preference of the CASA Program that Peace Officers or those with a Professional Concealed Weapons permit do not carry any weapons when visiting children or families due to possible trauma or reaction.

As a reminder to those who possess a non-professional concealed weapons permit: When visiting children at school, it is illegal in Iowa to have a firearm on any school property, including the parking lot. This same law applies to public parks in areas that

are not designated as 'public hunting' areas as referenced in Iowa Code 724.4A(1). Many school districts have created policies extending this to all other types of weapons such as knives and chemical weapons. When conducting CASA-related business at a school, please leave any weapons at your home.

B. Case Record Management

1. Advocates are encouraged to use the ICO system for their case records in place of maintaining a paper copy or storing electronic documents on their personal devices.
2. If an advocate requests a paper copy of the file, copy the case file information and prepare a working file for the advocate. Give the file to the CASA Advocate at the time of assignment.
3. If an advocate requests a paper copy of the file, any subsequent case file information received during the life of the case will also be given to the advocate for a comprehensive record of the case.
4. It is critical for advocates to realize that the materials contained in these case records are confidential and they must take precautions to safeguard their working records when they are in their possession. Violation of maintaining the confidentiality of records constitutes a serious misdemeanor.
   a. All electronic copies must be stored in a password protected folder.
   b. Paper copies must be kept in a secured location.
5. Upon case closure, the advocate must delete all electronic documents and return the complete case record to the office within two weeks if s(he) has printed case documents. The CASA case record is shredded upon receipt by the program staff.

Section 5: CASA Management

A. Training

1. Each year CASA advocates must obtain 12 additional hours of training related to advocacy and child welfare issues. This is prorated the first year dependent upon the advocate's start date. For example, if an advocate starts in August, s(he) is required to obtain 4 additional hours of in-service training that year.
2. Any additional training that is not provided by the CASA program must be submitted to the Coordinator for consideration and approval to meet in-service requirements.
3. Annual in-service training opportunities for advocates must include but are not limited to: cultural competency, disproportionality, disparity in outcome training, and recognizing abuse and neglect, report writing and effective recommendations, ethics and understanding confidentiality, civility and working collaboratively with others and review of the CASA policies and procedures.

B. Monthly Advocate Update

1. At the end of each month, advocates are required to complete the Monthly Advocate Update and submit it to the local Coordinator, or the CASA Coach where assigned, by deadlines as identified by local office protocols.
2. Advocates are encouraged to also enter hours and miles in the ICAB online data system (ICO). For Advocates who do not utilize ICO, program staff enters each advocate's hours and miles into ICO under Activity.

3. If an Advocate does not submit hours and miles on the Monthly Advocate Update, program staff enters zero (0) for that month's hours and miles in ICO for the advocate. Continued efforts are made to obtain the information. Overdue hours and miles can be entered into ICO with the next month's data.

C. CASA Record

1. The CASA program maintains a record of each CASA Advocate that may be reviewed by the advocate with the *exception of confidential reference documentation and record checks.*
2. The CASA record contains, at minimum:
   a. Application with emergency contact information and employment history
   b. Confidential reference documentation.
   c. Documentation of all records checks.
   d. Training records.
   e. Advocate Skills and Perspective Assessment (effective 7/1/15)
   f. Performance reviews and any other documentation related to performance.
   g. Documentation of CASA status. This is maintained in Iowa's case management system.
   h. Copy of the advocate's current driver's license and verification of automobile insurance if the advocate chooses to transport a CASA child.
   i. Documentation of personal interview.
   j. Copy of the Oath of Confidentiality.
   k. Signed policy acknowledgement form
   l. Exception to policy forms, if applicable (caseloads and/or in-person contact with child)
   m. Resignation or dismissal documentation
   n. Exit Survey

D. Release of CASA appointment from a case

1. Closure of case. The entry of an order discharging a child from the jurisdiction of the court shall automatically serve to terminate the appointment of the CASA advocate.
2. Program request. The Coordinator may request that the CASA appointment be dismissed.
3. Court Termination**.** The court reserves the right to terminate the appointment of a CASA Advocate.

E. Complaints and Grievances

1. If any concerns arise relating to the performance of the professionals involved in the case, such concerns shall be relayed to the Coordinator if the respective parties cannot resolve the concerns.
2. General concerns about CASA policy or procedures must be directed in the following order: Coordinator, Deputy Administrator or the Administrator.
3. When the Coordinator and the CASA Advocate differ regarding recommendations made to the court; the advocate's recommendations will take precedence as long as they are consistent with Juvenile Code.
4. If an interested party has a grievance against an Advocate, that individual can contact the Coordinator regarding the concerns. If the Coordinator is unable to resolve the concerns, the grievance will be referred to the State Office for resolution.
5. If a conflict or grievance occurs between the Coordinator and an advocate, the State Office will be consulted for resolution.

F. Case Progress Reviews

1. Coordinators and CASA coaches will maintain a personal, yet professional relationship with the advocates.
2. The progress of all Advocates will be reviewed on a regular basis. An Advocate will review case progress after s(he) has been assigned to the first case for six months and yearly thereafter.
   a. If issues arise between the scheduled evaluations, an additional evaluation can be performed.
   b. All completed reviews must be shared with the advocate.
   c. A copy of each review must be kept in the CASA record.

G. Dismissal

1. The Coordinator (in consultation with the Administrator) may request the dismissal of an advocate from the CASA program.
2. Appropriate grounds for dismissal of a CASA Advocate include, but are not limited to the following:
   a. The individual takes action without program or court approval that endangers the child or is outside the role or authority of the CASA program.
   b. The individual violates a program policy, court rule or law.
   c. The individual demonstrates an inability to effectively carry out their duties.
   d. The individual fails to complete required pre-service and ongoing training.
   e. The individual engages in ex-parte communication with the court.
   f. The individual falsifies his or her application or misrepresents facts during the screening process.
   g. The existence of confirmed or founded reports of child abuse/neglect against the individual.
   h. The individual fails to report suspected child abuse on his/her case, of which he or she is aware, and a subsequent CPSAS report substantiates the abuse.
   i. The individual fails to report a conflict of interest.
   j. The individual experiences an irresolvable conflict of interest that occurs after case assignment.

H. Leave of Absence

1. A CASA advocate may take a leave of absence from active participation in a case. An advocate with this status may be active with the CASA program in other volunteer ways.
2. Advocates will remain on distribution lists and continue to receive program materials, updates, and training information.
3. On Leave status can continue for up to 24 months, with the individual completing a minimum of twelve (12) in-service hours per year during that 24-month period of time.
4. On Leave status exceeding 24 months, with no planned date for reactivation into the program, will result in the removal of the advocate from the program roster.
5. Reinstatement to active status would require completion of additional pre-service training hours as determined by the Coordinator.

I. Resignation

1. When a CASA Advocate desires to be relieved of the responsibilities of the program, the advocate must submit his or her resignation in writing to the Coordinator.
2. The Coordinator will submit a request to the court for the CASA Advocate to be released from the case due to the advocate's resignation from the program.
3. The advocate must return all case-related documentation to the Coordinator within two weeks of resigning from the program and destroy any electronic files.

4. The Advocate must return the CASA identification badge upon leaving the CASA program.
5. The advocate must complete an Exit Survey upon leaving the CASA program.

ICAB ELECTRONIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Electronic and social media, when used appropriately, can be a powerful tool to increase awareness, support and sense of community for those of us engaged in advocacy for abused and neglected children. It is important that those who choose to engage in social media understand what is recommended, expected and required when they discuss CASA-related topics. Our ability to serve children depends entirely on the trust and support of our community, and it is critical that we handle the confidential information entrusted to us responsibly. *(This introduction is adapted from the National CASA Association.)*

When you engage in social media and online communication, you become a public figure. As a public figure that is associated with CASA, you have a responsibility to help protect this organization and our clients. The following expectations are intended to give you guidance in both promoting and protecting CASA, and to protect the children we serve.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of any electronic or social media site created/used by ICAB staff is to provide news, in-service training opportunities and other CASA Program-related materials to CASA volunteers serving in Iowa. It is also intended to provide program staff and volunteers a site through which program-related current events and training topics can be discussed. It is not intended nor should it be used as a site to post or exchange information about actual cases that could be used to identify a specific child or other specific parties in a case involving child abuse and neglect or any other information which program staff and volunteers are required to keep confidential by law or policy.

Comments submitted to sites will be reviewed and, at the sole discretion of program staff, a representative sample may be posted on the site or comments may not be posted. In addition to the prohibited information enumerated above, the following forms of information will not be posted:

a. Comments not topically related to the particular content being commented upon;
b. Profane language or content;
c. Use of harassing language or tone;
d. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
e. Obscene sexual content or links to obscene sexual content;
f. Solicitations of commerce;
g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
i. Information or content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party; or,
j. Information that promotes or opposes any person campaigning for election to a political office.

User Expectations:

1. **Staff**
    a. Are permitted to develop and use social media tools as a recruitment and information tool as time allows. This is not a required part of job duties.
    b. Post information about events such as swearing-in local volunteers, interesting articles/videos inspirational quotes and other events at the local or state level.
    c. Have volunteers sign a statement prior to swearing in that gives permission to use their photo for online purposes.
    d. Staff shall notify judges that photographs taken of them may be used in print or electronic media.

2. **Advocates**
    a. Can use social media to promote the CASA program and talk in generalities about their volunteer experiences. CASAs must follow the local, state and National CASA program policies on social media.
    b. Cannot at anytime disclose names, circumstances, events or pictures of anyone they are working with, including children, families, caregivers, foster parents, etc.
    c. Are not allowed to friend or follow anyone who would fall under the confidentiality policy such as children, family, foster parents and caregivers.
    d. Cannot use social media to express their opinions about the child welfare process, a ruling, an action taken by a professional or someone on their case.
    e. CASAs must use discretion when viewing information from social media about individuals related to a CASA case that may impact decision-making. CASAs will consult with the program Coordinator regarding how best to handle the information.

Information Subject to Public Disclosure

The information submitted to this site is subject to the access and confidentiality provisions of Chapter 22 and any other applicable sections of the Code of Iowa. Any content posted may be subject to public disclosure including Open Records requests.

Authorized Users and Password Protections

Only program staff and sworn ICAB volunteers will be approved to access sites. Persons with approved access shall not allow others to access the site using their login and password information. Passwords shall be different than other agency or program network passwords and be:

a. At least eight characters,
b. A mixture of numbers, upper and lower case letters,
c. Include at least one special character, and
d. Changed at least every sixty days.

In addition, ICAB staff and volunteers will adhere to the *National CASA Association Online Communication and Social Media Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers and Social Media Posting Policy.*

National CASA Association Online Communication and Social Media Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers

The National CASA Association believes that social media tools, when used appropriately, can be a powerful tool to increase awareness, support and sense of community for those of us engaged in advocacy for abused and neglected children. We believe that a thoughtful approach to online conversation and interaction among people online (on blogs, social networking, link-sharing, etc.) can enhance the reputation of the CASA and GAL movement and help recruit needed supporters and volunteers.

While National CASA encourages CASA and GAL staff, board members and 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 CASA-related topics—whether at work or on their own time. Our ability to serve children as a national cause depends on the trust and support of the American public, and it is critical that we tell our story well—and handle the confidential information entrusted to us responsibly.

The following 10 guidelines will help you engage in online conversations about your involvement with the CASA cause in a way that is appropriate, yet still interesting. This policy document is built largely on the work of the American Red Cross, IBM, CBS Interactive and CASA of Franklin County, OH. We thank these organizations for disclosing their policies publicly so that all of us can learn from them.

10 Online Communication and Social Media Guidelines

1. **Be transparent.** Identify yourself and your role at the CASA program (staff/volunteer/board member) when you discuss CASA-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 National CASA or your state or local CASA program (unless, of course, you are posting as part of your employment responsibilities for a program—as a communications or online outreach manager, for example).

2. **Always comply with the law in regard to copyright/plagiarism**. Never post someone else's work without their express permission (other than short quotes that comply with the "fair use" exceptions).

3. **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 CASA cause. In choosing your words or content, imagine your supervisor and your family reading everything you post.

4. **Be respectful.** Don't 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.

5. **Be considerate.** Remember that anyone, including fellow volunteers and CASA staff, may be actively reading what you publish online. Refrain from any communication intended to bash or embarrass your state or local CASA program, families, board members, donors or your

colleagues. 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.

6. **Be accurate.** Even though your posts may be primarily made up of personal opinion, 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.

7. **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!

8. **Try to add value.** Does your posting provide worthwhile information and perspective? Does it help you, your coworkers, volunteers and supporters better understand and feel more connected to our cause? Does it build a positive sense of community?

9. **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. The obvious exception is if you have specifically been assigned to perform an online activity related to your responsibilities as a CASA employee or volunteer.

10. **Don't reveal confidential information.** Sharing stories that illustrate the value of CASA advocacy for children is often the most powerful way to engage the public in our cause and promote empathy for the children we serve. However, National CASA Quality Assurance standards require:
    - Respect for the children's and families' rights to privacy in regard to personal information
    - Adherence to the confidentiality restrictions imposed by law and CASA policies and procedures

    It is unacceptable to discuss online any identifiable details of cases. 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 "13-year-old girl." You should be careful to protect the dignity of families, children and social agencies, even if they are not named.

    Volunteers and staff should not link to personal pages (or become online "friends") of families or children they may encounter in their capacity with the CASA/GAL program. This includes email addresses, instant messenger names, blogs, photo sharing sites and social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube. In addition, many programs prohibit volunteers from giving their email address or cell phone number to the child(ren) or family members on any case to which they are assigned.

Online communications and social media tools enable individuals to share insights and information—and express opinions—within the context of a globally distributed conversation. They support the democratization of knowledge and information and transform all of us from simply content consumers to content producers. If we follow the above guidelines, this exciting, evolving technology can be harnessed to help us all make a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children.

National CASA Association Social Media Posting Policy

Thank you to all of our Facebook page visitors—especially those of you who use CASAforChildren.org and this Facebook page as a way to deepen your connection to other people engaged in the important work of finding safe, permanent homes for abused and neglected children. We have committed to expanding our communication with members of the CASA community by posting news and responding as quickly as we can to questions raised here.

We truly appreciate your comments and insights. We are a community that values mutual respect and civility. Disagreements, debates, and discussions are to be expected—that's often how we learn from each other. It's important that we engage in these conversations in a way that is respectful and positive.

Please treat each other with respect. Name-calling and offensive or foul language just isn't acceptable. We want a free and open discussion, but we will delete posts that are overly disruptive to the community.

Also, never post your personal contact information here. If you need to reach us, call our main number at 1-800-628-3233 or use the online forms at CASAforChildren.org. Sharing contact information is neither safe nor wise. We're committed to taking every step to protect everyone's privacy. Help us with that.

Finally, advertising or solicitation is not the purpose of our page. Posts including advertising or promoting a specific Web site, event, or organization may be deleted.

Online tools can help us expand the CASA movement. We encourage all of our supporters to be involved. Let's treat each other with dignity and respect and build a strong and effective online community to make a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children.

Initial Letter of Acknowledgement by CASA Advocate

I have received a copy of and read the ***CASA Program: Advocate Policies and Procedures Manual..*** I understand its contents and agree to follow the policies and procedures as set forth in it**.** As policies are updated, I understand changes will be provided to me in written form.

I further understand my responsibilities as a CASA and failure to perform those duties may result in dismissal from the program.

CASA acceptance/declination regarding Transporting CASA children:

☐ I understand the responsibility and liability associated with transporting CASA children and/or family members; I **accept this responsibility** and will comply with the expectations as set forth in this policy.

☐ Further, I understand that the CASA Coordinator has the discretion to revoke my privilege to transport a CASA child or family members at any time if the above guidelines are not met. **-OR-**

☐ I **decline to transport** CASA children and/or family members. I understand that if I choose to transport at a later date, I will sign a new Letter of Acknowledgement and comply with the expectations as set forth in the transportation policy.

Use of CASA photographs:

☐ The CASA program **is allowed** to post photographs of me online or submit to print media as they relate to the CASA program. **–OR-**

☐ The CASA program **is not allowed** to post any photographs of me online or submit to print media at any time.

Acknowledgement of Social Media Policy:

☐ I have read, understand and will abide by the ICAB Electronic and Social Media Policy and the National CASA Association Online Communication and Social Media Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers and Social Media Posting Policy; enhancing the credibility of the CASA role and the integrity of my activity as a CASA.

CASA Signature	**Coordinator Signature**
Print CASA name	**Date**

Acknowledgement of Receipt by CASA Advocate

Revision of the CASA Program: Advocate Policies and Procedures manual

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received the *CASA Program: Advocate Policy and Procedure Manual.*

I have been directed to read the *CASA Program: Advocate Policy and Procedure Manual* and was offered an opportunity to ask questions about the contents. I am also aware that I am expected to read and be familiar with any updates to the policies and procedures contained in this manual. I acknowledge my understanding of the expectations for advocating within the framework of the policies and procedures as contained in this manual.

_____

Advocate's Signature Date

_____

Coordinator's Signature Date

Please sign, date and return this to the local coordinator within 15 days of receiving the updated Advocate Policy & Procedure Manual.