



CASA

Court Appointed
Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN



A **POWERFUL VOICE** for Abused & Neglected Children in SWLA

Every child has the right to safety and security, unfortunately that is not always the case. At Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), a Division of Family & Youth, we rely on trained volunteers who speak in court for the best interests of a child who has been removed from his or her home due to abuse and/or neglect. These volunteers are ordinary people from all walks of life who step-up to assist judges in getting to know the child and their specific case.

They care, listen, and put the child's interests before all others. CASA volunteers do not provide legal representation, nor do they replace case workers, but they serve as the eyes and ears of the court in partnership with involved parties. Ultimately, they speak for the children they represent when they cannot speak for themselves to help them heal and thrive!



Family & Youth was established as a non-profit in 1970 to provide affordable and professional services dedicated to advocacy, counseling and education for the people of Southwest Louisiana and in communities we are called to serve.

**FAMILY
& YOUTH** 
building a stronger community



To learn more,
visit FYCA.org or call (337) 436-9533.



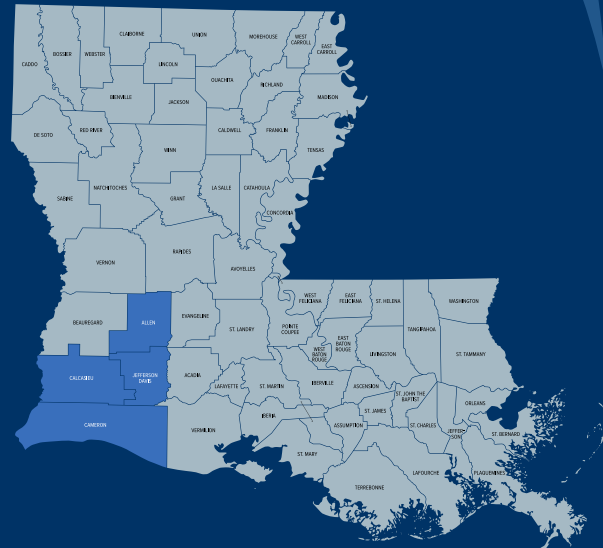
Your Voice, Their Future



While the work with the children is one-on-one, CASA volunteers do not work alone. Together, with state organizations, the support of Family & Youth and backing from the national CASA Association, volunteers are a powerful voice for children in, helping them reach safe, permanent homes and loving families more quickly.

SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Court Appointed Advocacy
- Case Management
- Volunteer Training
- Child Abuse Education & Awareness
- Court Support
- Service Coordination
- Consultation



How Does Your Voice CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY?



The impact of trained and motivated CASA volunteers has been profound. According to the National CASA/GAL Association for Children, some 93 percent of judges who oversee children in foster care report that CASA volunteers are effective in promoting the long-term well-being of youth they are assigned to, and 79 percent report benefits in terms of psychological well-being. Furthermore, the rate of youths who leave foster care but then are forced to return to it is cut in half if a CASA volunteer is involved.

When a CASA volunteer is assigned to a child's case, a higher number of services are ordered for children and families, resulting in better outcomes academically and behaviorally.



Studies have shown that a child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to find a safe and permanent home than a child without.



A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to graduate high school.

How Much Time is Involved?

A CASA's volunteer time varies with each case. Hours are flexible, except when a court hearing is scheduled. A CASA can expect to spend pend 8 hours per month working on a case. The majority of CASA volunteers have full or part-time jobs and are able to meet their advocacy responsibilities.

YOU WILL:

- Spend time with the child learning about their lives, their hopes, and their dreams.
- Be a consistent presence who cares, listens and stands by them.
- Meet with the people in their lives to ensure the child's needs are being met.
- Share what you have learned with the court so the judge can make the most informed decisions and the child's voice can be heard.



CASA volunteers provide consistency and stability for the child throughout the proceedings. The judge may change, caseworkers may change, but the CASA may be the only consistent person a child has throughout the court process.



A child with a CASA volunteer experiences fewer moves between foster placements, and is less likely to spend extended periods in and re-entry to the foster care system.



Children with advocates report significantly higher levels of hope due to positive outcomes such as their overall wellbeing, academic success, increase in self-control, positive social relationships, and optimism.



JUST A FEW HOURS A MONTH CAN
HAVE A LIFETIME OF IMPACT!



Scan for more info on Lending
Your Voice to a Child in Need



Department of
Children & Family Services
Building a Stronger Louisiana

Paid for with public funds provided by the people of Louisiana.

Become a CASA VOLUNTEER

There are hundreds of children in the foster care system in Southwest Louisiana, will you speak for them? To become a CASA volunteer, the following is required:

- Must be 21 years old or older
- Participate in an entry interview
- 30-hours of training
- Pass a background check

Volunteering for CASA does not require special education or qualifications, just a heart for children in need.

Many advocates report a deep satisfaction in helping children, but they also experience:

- Improved sense of wellbeing mentally and physically
- Professional development and enhanced self esteem
- A greater sense of purpose and connection to community

VOLUNTEER YOUR VOICE TODAY TO HELP A CHILD IN NEED!



Chances are someone you know has used one of Family & Youth's eight divisions in some way over the years, whether it is career guidance, or perhaps individual counseling, or helping today's youth become tomorrow's leaders. These high-quality and much needed services to build a stronger community are made possible through volunteers, grants, fundraising events and donations. All of us working together will ensure a positive and productive future for Southwest Louisiana.

To learn more or to get involved, please visit our website at FYCA.org or give us a call at (337) 436-9533.

