



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

Flex-Learning Edition

2018 Version 2

Volunteer Manual

**SESSION 1: IN PERSON TRAINING
GETTING STARTED—THE BLUEX CASE**

SESSION 1:

Getting Started— The BleuxCase

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In-Person Training

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Activity 1.8: Putting a Face with a Name / Ice Breaker

Step 1: In pairs, introduce yourself to your partner (do you remember anything about your partner from what he or she posted online?). Share the following with each other:

- One reason you want to become a CASA/GAL volunteer
- One thing that stood out for you during the online portion of Session 1
- One thing you're most excited about as you begin training
- One concern that you have about volunteering

Step 2: Return to the large group and introduce your interview partner to your fellow participants by sharing his or her name and three things that describe that person, including one reason why they chose to become a volunteer.

Activity 1.9: Expectations / Housekeeping / Parking Lot

Step 1: Parking Lot — On a flipchart page, note (or “park”) issues unrelated to the current chapter and make a plan to address them later.

Step 2: Share your expectations of training. Record them on a flipchart. If any of your expectations fall outside the parameters of this training, you may want to add these items to the Parking Lot at this point.

Step 3: Create a list of group agreements that sets the tone for how participants will agree to work together both in-person and online (including items such as confidentiality, respect, etc.). Post these agreements on a flipchart.

Activity 1.10: The Volunteer Child Relationship

Parameters for CASA/GAL Volunteer Relationships:

Read the Volunteer-Child Relationship Dilemmas Worksheet Handout (Pages 2 to 5). Using the Volunteer-Child Relationship Dilemma Worksheet, read each situation and identify the crux of the dilemma as well as the potential consequences to the child, the family, the CASA/GAL volunteer or the CASA/ GAL program. Write down one possible solution for each dilemma. Be prepared to share your ideas with the large group.

Activity 1.11: CASA/GAL Volunteer Tasks

Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteer Work

Much of the information explored up to this point has focused on your role or duties as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Fulfilling duties is an important part of being a successful CASA/GAL volunteer, but it is only one part. Your knowledge, skills and personal attributes are also very important.

As part of your online work, you completed the Competency Checklist. In a small group, share one area of strength and one area you want to develop. Review your group's areas of strengths and areas that need development, and be ready to report back the common areas to the larger group. You will revisit the competencies checklist during the final chapter to evaluate areas you've strengthened through training and areas you still want to work on.

The facilitator will partner with you throughout the training process to evaluate your readiness and address any areas of concern.

Activity 1.12: Who Participates in a Case?

Step 1: As the facilitator describes the process that a child welfare case takes in your state, record the names of hearings and timeframes on the Child Welfare Chart handout. The facilitator will explain the purpose of each hearing and provide examples of tasks that CASA/GAL volunteers engage in along the way.

Step 2: Listen as the facilitator describes the roles of those involved in a court case, which are outlined below. As you listen, note in the margin any differences in your jurisdiction and use the space provided to record information relevant to your jurisdiction. If you have questions, share them in the large group.

IN-PERSON TRAINING: VOLUNTEER MANUAL

Who Participates in a Case?

THE CHILD

Why is the child's case in court?

- A petition has been filed alleging abuse or neglect.

What does the child need during court intervention?

- The child needs the court to order an appropriate intervention and treatment plan so he/she can live in a safe, stable home without ongoing need for intervention from the child protection agency.
- The areas the child needs addressed include: safety/protection, placement if the child is out of the home, family contact, belonging to a family, financial support, a support system, education, mental health and physical health.
- The child needs the court intervention to be focused and timely.
- The child needs services provided that will meet his/her needs.
- Other _____

CASA/GAL VOLUNTEER

What is this person called in my area?

What does the CASA/GAL volunteer do in the case?

- Independently gathers information about the child's case
- Determines the child's needs
- Explores family and community resources to meet the child's needs

IN-PERSON TRAINING: VOLUNTEER MANUAL

Who Participates in a Case?

- Advocates for the child
- Monitors the case
- Is the voice for what is in the child's best interest
- Is the voice for the child's expressed wishes
- Other_____

What does the CASA/GAL volunteer bring to the case?

- An interest in improving the life of the child through the court process
- Time, energy and focus
- Longevity (he/she often stays on the case from beginning to end)
- An "outside the system" point of view and an independent perspective
- The community's standard for the care and protection of its children
- Other_____

When is the CASA/GAL volunteer involved in the case?

- In my jurisdiction: _

ATTORNEY FOR THE CASA/GAL PROGRAM OR CHILD

In my jurisdiction, this attorney represents [circle one]:

The child's wishes The child's best interest The CASA/GAL program

What does the attorney for the program/child do in the case?

- Translates the CASA/GAL volunteer's research and recommendations into a form that the court can effectively use to address the child's needs (within the law, within the scope of the volunteer role, fact-based, etc.)
- Provides legal consultation to the CASA/GAL volunteer and program staff regarding the case (if the attorney represents the program rather than the child directly)
- Files legal documents relevant to the child's case
- Other_____

What does the attorney for the program/child bring to the case?

- Legal expertise, facilitation and negotiation skills and courtroom experience

When is the attorney for the program/child involved in the case?

- From the petition filing through the end of the court case

PARENTS/CARETAKERS NAMED IN THE PETITION

In my area this person is called_

Why are the parents/caretakers involved in the case?

- They have been forced into this court action because the child protection agency asked the court to intervene to protect the child from maltreatment and/or to have his/her basic needs met.
- They need to comply with the child protection agency's intervention plan and correct the conditions that led to the child's removal, thereby effectively protecting their child and/or enabling their child to return home.
- They need to follow the orders of the court or risk having their parental rights terminated.

What do the parents/caretakers bring to the case?

- Love for the child, family ties, history of parenting, abilities, resources and skills as parents, interactions with the child and each other, mental, emotional and physical health or illness, support system, housing and income and their own issues/problems.

ATTORNEY FOR THE PARENT/CARETAKER

What does the attorney for the parent/caretaker do in the case?

- Represents the wishes of the parent/caretaker he/she represents
- Protects the legal rights of the parent/caretaker in court
- Advises the parent/caretaker on legal matters
- Files legal documents relevant to the case

IN-PERSON TRAINING: VOLUNTEER MANUAL

- Other_____

What does the attorney for the parent/caretaker bring to the case?

- Legal expertise, facilitation and negotiation skills and courtroom experience

When is the attorney for the parent/caretaker involved in the case?

- From the petition filing through the end of the court case

CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY CASEWORKER

In my area this person is called_

What is the role of the child protection agency caseworker in the case?

- The caseworker has completed a risk assessment process and, based on risk and/or substantiated allegations of abuse and/or neglect, has determined the need for court intervention. The caseworker petitioned the court to intervene on the child's behalf because:
 - He/she has developed an intervention plan with the family, which has not resulted in eliminating the risk that child maltreatment will recur, or
 - Due to risk of imminent danger, he/she has removed the child from his/her home to ensure the child's safety.
- The caseworker needs the court to order that the agency's intervention and treatment plan be followed by the parents/caretakers and other service providers so that the need for continuous agency intervention is not required to ensure the child receives proper care and protection.
- The caseworker is responsible for managing the case and arranging for court-ordered services to be provided to the child and the child's family.
- Other_____

What does the child protection agency caseworker bring to the case?

- Training in analyzing risk, assessing service needs and providing guidance, and directing services for families to provide them with the knowledge, skills and resources necessary for change
- Links to other service providers so that the family can access resources outside the child protective services system

When is the child protection agency caseworker involved in the case?

- From the initial contact with the family and/or child until the agency's services are no longer needed

ATTORNEY FOR THE CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY OR THE COUNTY OR THE STATE

In my area this person is called _

In my jurisdiction this attorney represents [circle one]:

- The child protection agency
- The county
- The state

What does this attorney do in the case?

- Represents the position of the agency/county/state in court
- Protects the agency/county/state from liability
- Advises the agency/county/state regarding its responsibilities as outlined in the law
- Files legal documents relevant to the case
- Other

What does this attorney bring to the case?

Legal expertise, facilitation and negotiation skills and courtroom experience

When is this attorney involved in the case?

From the petition filing through the end of the case

INDIAN CHILD'S TRIBE

What does the Indian child's tribe do in the case?

- Ensures that the parents, the child and the tribe have all the rights they are afforded pursuant to ICWA
- Brings culturally relevant service options and dispositional recommendations to the attention of the court
- Protects the tribe's interest in the child and ensures the preservation of the child's ties to the tribe and its resources
- Where appropriate, offers or requires that the tribe take jurisdiction of the matter
- Files legal documents when necessary
- Other

What does the tribe bring to the case?

- A very special perspective on preservation of the child's ties to the tribe
- Knowledge of relevant cultural practices and culturally relevant services that can be considered as potential resources for the child

JUDGE

What does the judge do in the case?

- Determines if there is a continued safety issue for the child that necessitates continued out-of-home placement if the child has been removed from home
- Represents the child's best interest and/or wishes and protects the child's legal rights in court
- Represents the "best interest of the child," as defined by the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), to the court
- Decides if the child is abused or neglected, and if so, orders services that will address the needs of the child
- Orders appropriate reviews
- Hears testimony, motions, etc., regarding the case
- Approves the permanent plan for the child
- Orders termination of parental rights when appropriate
- Settles disputed adoption cases
- Closes the court case when there is no longer a need for court intervention or the permanent plan has been achieved
- Other

When is the judge involved in the case?

- From the request for emergency custody at the petition filing until the court case is closed (or, if the child is not removed from home, from the arraignment or adjudication hearing, depending on jurisdiction, until the court case is closed)

Activity 1.13: Asking the Right Questions

Step 1: Listen as the facilitator briefly recaps the key facts in the Bleux case. Write down questions you want to answer in order to determine what is in Deshawn Bleux's best interest. What information do you need in order to make recommendations?

Step 2: Make a list of questions you want to answer in order of priority. What information is most important to gather first?