



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

CASA/GAL Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

Volunteer Manual

CHAPTER ONE

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Welcome to the CASA Movement!

On behalf of National CASA and our network of nearly 1,000 programs across the nation, let me begin by saying “thank you”. Thank you for the commitment you are making to children who have been abused or neglected. Thank you for the time you will invest in providing them the opportunity to thrive. And thank you for the thought and consideration you have and will continue to give to their future.

Dr. Steve Maraboli said, “my past has not defined me, destroyed me, deterred me, or defeated me; it has only strengthened me.” Because of the work you are about to do, the child for whom you advocate will embody this truth.

The evidence-informed curriculum you will use in your training is the product of decades of research and experience. This is more than a set of procedures and instructions. It is designed to instill in you the values shared across the CASA/GAL national network, including critical thinking, self-awareness, respect for all points of view, for the rights and dignity of all children and for effective collaboration with the court and others in the child welfare system. It will also help you understand how the skills and knowledge you currently possess will transfer to the advocacy role you will assume on behalf of children.

We are so very grateful for the hard work you will be doing. Please know that with every recommendation you make, every decision with which you struggle, and every life you transform, you are not alone. We will be with you on every step of this journey. Together, we will strive to ensure that every child can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive.

With much gratitude,

Tara Perry

Chief Executive Officer

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National CASA Association is proud to highlight the extensive collaborative work of the network in order to produce this revised curriculum. Without the individuals and programs listed below, this invaluable tool for the network and, ultimately, the children we serve would not be possible. Specifically, National CASA wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their tremendous contribution to this effort:

National CASA Curriculum Development Committee

Calvin Martin, Guardian ad Litem Program, Plataka, FL (co-chair)
Amia Barrows, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice, Richmond, VA (co-chair)
Arbor Buchanan, CASA of Northwest Arkansas, Springdale, AR
Kim Deer, Okmulgee Family Resource Center, Okmulgee, OK
Richard Heyl de Ortiz, Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition, New Paltz, NY
Peggy Larson, King County Dependency CASA, Seattle, WA
Rand Rosenbaum, CASA of Arizona, Phoenix, AZ
Jennifer Valentine, CASA of Atlantic & Cape May, Somers Point, NJ

Network Reviewers

Cindy Bizzell, North Carolina Guardian ad Litem Program, NC
Liz Kachris-Jones, North Carolina Guardian ad Litem Program, NC
Ben Wilkins, Dallas CASA, Dallas, TX

External Curriculum Consultants

Dr. Dale Curry, Professor and Author, Kent State University, Kent, OH
Frank Eckles, Executive Director, Academy for Competent Youth Work, College Station, TX
Joyce James, Joyce James Consulting, Round, Rock, TX

Pilot Programs

A Kid's Place CASA Program, Greeley, CO
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Douglas County CASA, Lawrence, KS
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CASA of Northwest Arkansas, Springdale, AR
CASA of Arizona, Phoenix, AZ

Curriculum Production Team

Janet Ward, Director of State Support, National CASA
Susan Grant, Network Development Officer, National CASA
Brad Ray, National Training Officer, National CASA
Marsha Kabakov, Director of Volunteer Training & Development, National CASA
Jim Gallisdorfer, National Brand and Marketing Officer, National CASA
John Trainor, Data Governance & Evaluation Officer, National CASA
Keith Hall, Chief Planning and Organizational Development Officer, National CASA
Jennie Goode and Anne Matthews, editors for pilot materials, Seattle, WA
CoreAxis Design Team

Overview

The National CASA Association Volunteer Training Curriculum is designed to give volunteers a solid base of knowledge and skills to begin their volunteer work. The Pre-Service Volunteer Manual will serve as their guide during training and will continue to be an important resource to which they refer throughout their service as CASA/GAL volunteers.

The manual begins with an overview of the CASA/GAL volunteer role, our need for volunteer advocates, and the history of child advocacy in the United States. It then moves into specific skills and knowledge volunteers require in order to work effectively with children and families. As participants are exposed to best practices, state-of-the-art research and specific steps to advocate for a case, they will be engaged in case-based projects. The training provides experiential opportunities to apply this knowledge in case study scenarios. The chapters in this curriculum are designed to be presented in the order in which they appear. To maintain the integrity of the curriculum it is important to ensure the content is presented in its entirety. The material in each chapter builds on knowledge gained in previous chapters, and information and tasks progress from simple to complex.

This curriculum lends itself to facilitation by one person with additional help from other staff members or experienced volunteers, who can assist with logistics and serve as resources for questions. If your program plans to use multiple facilitators for the curriculum, consider assigning one person to be present in the classroom consistently throughout the training. Some programs include presentations by practitioners such as attorneys and social workers as part of the training. Their participation can be supplemental but should not be a replacement for the curriculum provided here. Unless they will be using the curriculum content for their session, we recommend having guest speakers participate in a panel discussion at the end of the training or as part of a future in-service.

Each chapter—including introduction, activities, and closing—is approximately three hours of training. Activity times will vary according to the size of the group, the style of the facilitator, and the duration of discussion. Eight sessions of three and a half hours each should allow enough time to facilitate the training. There is substantial pre-work for each chapter that must be completed by the trainees prior to the next session. Trainees should be advised of this during the orientation process so that they can plan their time accordingly.

User Agreement and Uses for the Pre-Service Curriculum Manual

National CASA Association and its many contributors across the network have worked very hard to create a state-of-the art curriculum. This evidence-informed manual has been created by contributors who are experts in their field, with the sole purpose of training CASA/GAL advocates to provide the best advocacy for the children served. Out of respect for this work, and because of the copyrights and legal protections this manual possesses, use of this manual (in part or in whole) by any person or entity that is not a member in good standing of National CASA is strictly forbidden. Additionally, this manual is only to be used as a pre-service curriculum for potential advocates that have been recruited and screened by CASA/GAL programs in good standing with National CASA.

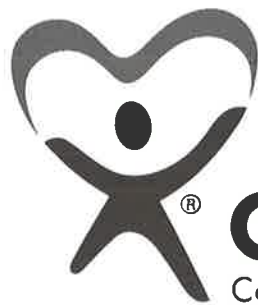
As facilitators, please express condition of use to any participant undergoing training or accessing this manual. If any violation of this policy is discovered, National CASA is to be notified immediately in order to ensure the integrity of curriculum's use.

The Volunteer Manual Methodology

This curriculum is based on a set of learning activities designed to stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills among participants. Activities present scenarios and challenges learners to consider how they will use it in working a case. Activity instructions appear in boxes and are frequently followed by text or worksheets.

Facilitators will assign pre-work at the end of each chapter (and before the first chapter). The pre-work is an essential tool, enabling volunteers to explore topics in more depth, as they prepare for the next session. If you run short on time in a chapter, you may want to assign incomplete material as homework.

A list of Supplemental Learning Resources will be provided in a comprehensive document that will be made available online. Organized by topics covered in Chapters 1–8, this list provides facilitators and participants alike with additional information on topics relevant to CASA/GAL volunteer work. Please look over resources available for each chapter in order to direct participants to deeper learning content as issues arise.



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CHAPTER ONE



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CHAPTER 1:

Introducing the CASA/GAL Volunteer Role

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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 1: Pre-Work



- ✓ Read the “CASA/GAL Volunteer Job Description” provided by the facilitator.
- ✓ Read “Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteer Work” checklist, and mark the areas that are your strengths and the areas that you want to work on.
- ✓ Read the “Child Welfare History” handout and write down any questions you have.
- ✓ Read the “Alphabet Soup” list of acronyms used by your local CASA/GAL program and court system.
- ✓ Read the “Bleux Case File” and write a one-to-two-paragraph case history and a few questions.

3

Prior to this training session, you should have completed the following:

- Read the CASA/GAL volunteer job description provided by the facilitator.
- Read the Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteer Work checklist, and mark the areas that are your strengths and the areas that you want to work on.
- Read the Child Welfare History handout, and write down any questions you have about the material.
- Read the “Alphabet Soup” list of acronyms used by your local CASA/GAL program and court system.
- Read the Bleux Case File. Write a one- or two-paragraph case history, as well as a few questions you have about the case.

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter introduces you to your fellow training participants and provides an overview of information about the CASA/GAL volunteer role and the child welfare system.

Competency Building in Chapter 1	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills, & Attributes Development in Chapter 1
CASA/GAL Role	<p>Knows how to define the CASA/GAL volunteer role</p> <p>Understands the function of a CASA/GAL report to the court</p> <p>Understands the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to succeed as a CASA/ GAL volunteer</p>
Foundation of Knowledge	<p>Understands the nature and scope of the roles of others (e.g., caseworkers, attorneys, therapists, etc.)</p> <p>Understands the nature and scope of the child welfare system</p> <p>Knows the importance of the federal laws that impact his/her advocacy</p> <p>Understands a child's journey through the child welfare system</p>

The Volunteer Role

Introductions and Expectations: Activity 1A

Part 1: In pairs, introduce yourself to your partner. Share the following with each other:

- One reason you want to become a CASA/GAL volunteer
- One thing you're most excited about as you begin training
- One concern you have about volunteering

Part 2: In the large group, introduce your partner to your fellow participants by briefly sharing their name and one word that describes their reason for volunteering.

Part 3: Share one or two expectations you have as you begin CASA/GAL volunteer training. The facilitator will record your expectations on a flipchart.

Part 4: Create a list of group agreements that set the tone for how you will work together during training. Listen as the facilitator describes what will be expected of you during training and what you can expect of the facilitator.

What to Expect During Training

As a participant, you are expected to:

- Complete Pre-Work between the training sessions
- Attend all training sessions
- Participate in the activities
- Ask questions
- Take responsibility for your own learning

You can expect the facilitator to:

- Establish an environment conducive to learning
- Keep things moving
- Adjust the activities or timing to better meet the needs of the group
- Be a resource for participants

Exploring the Impact of CASA/GAL Volunteers:

Activity 1B

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator talks about the mission of the CASA/GAL volunteer movement.

The mission of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, together with its state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every abused or neglected child in the United States can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive.

Part 2: Watch Make a Lifelong Difference, a video that gives a broad overview of the difference that a CASA/GAL volunteer can make in a child's life. As you watch the video, take note of some specific ways the CASA/GAL volunteers made a difference in the lives of the people featured.

Part 3: In the large group, share some of your thoughts on how having a CASA/GAL volunteer made a difference in the lives of the individuals in the video. Then listen as the facilitator presents evidence of the effectiveness of CASA/GAL volunteers.

Evidence of Effectiveness



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

- More likely to be adopted
- Half as likely to re-enter foster care
- Substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care
- More likely to have a plan for permanency, especially children of color

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

- More services ordered for the children

...and are more likely to have a consistent, responsible adult presence:

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

Evidence of Effectiveness, Cont'd.

Children with CASA/GAL volunteers spend less time in foster care and are less likely to be bounced from home to home. CASA/GAL volunteers...

- Improve representation of children
- Reduce the time needed by lawyers
- Are more likely than paid lawyers to file written reports
- Are highly effective in having their recommendations adopted by the court

Children with CASA/GAL volunteers do better in school...

- More likely to pass all courses
- More likely to receive quality educational services
- Less likely to have poor conduct in school
- Less likely to be expelled

...and score better on nine protective factors:

- 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
- Ability to work out conflicts

From www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5332511/k.7D2A/Evidence_of_Effectiveness.htm.

The CASA/GAL Volunteer Role in Action: Activity 1C

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator describes the four key components of the CASA/GAL volunteer role.

Part 2: Think back on the Bleux case, which you read before coming to class. Based on what you learned about the four key components of the CASA/GAL volunteer role, how could a volunteer make a difference if assigned to this case?

Key Components of the CASA/GAL Volunteer Role



Information Gathering

Carry out an objective examination of the situation including relevant history, environment, relationships and needs of the child.

Facilitation

Identify resources and services for the child and facilitate a collaborative relationship between all parties involved in the case, helping to create a situation in which the child's needs can be met.

Advocacy

Speak up for the child by making fact-based recommendations regarding the child's best interest in a written court report.

Monitoring

Keep track of whether the orders of the court and the plans of the child protective services agency are carried out, and report to the court or collaborate with the child protective services agency when any of the parties do not follow those orders and plans.



CASA/GAL volunteers are expected to perform the tasks listed below. These tasks constitute what is *minimally* required to effectively fulfill the role as an advocate for a child in the child welfare system:

- Review/research case information.
- Participate in case staffings, family team meetings, court hearings, school-related meetings, etc.
- Establish rapport and relationships with the child and all other parties in the case.
- Meet with the child regularly (at least once per month, or per your program's requirements) and monitor his/her placement.
- Assess the child's physical, mental, behavioral and educational needs.
- Observe parent-child interactions.
- Monitor adherence to court orders to ensure compliance.
- Identify needs and advocate for services (make referrals as needed).
- Stay abreast of the most up-to-date case information.
- Check for accountability in service planning and delivery to ensure for quality.
- Document all activities, accurately taking note of any concerns, progress or lack thereof.
- Identify resources within the child's family and help build/maintain connections.
- Facilitate communication among parties while maintaining confidentiality.
- Submit required reports and case updates on or before the specified due date.
- Monitor compliance with court timelines to expedite permanency.
- Maintain consistent contact with the CASA/GAL supervisor (at least monthly).
- Complete a minimum of 12 hours of in-service training each year.

CASA/GAL Volunteer Tasks, Cont'd.

- Comply with CASA/GAL policies, procedures and ethical guidelines that promote and protect the CASA/GAL program.
- Remain appointed until the case is closed.
- Maintain monthly contact with caregiver.
- Maintain monthly contact with service providers.
- Maintain documentation required by local CASA/GAL staff.

CASA/GAL Volunteer Tasks: Activity 1D

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 Pre-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.

Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteer Work Handout

Please review the following competency checklist. As you review each area, note whether it is a current strength or if it is an area that needs further development.

Volunteer Name:

Date:

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
CASA/GAL Role	Knows how to define the CASA/GAL role		
	Understands the function of a CASA/GAL report to the court		
	Understands the competencies necessary to succeed as a CASA/GAL volunteer		
	Knows how to act within the CASA/GAL volunteer role and can differentiate his/her role from that of others involved in the case		
	Knows how to find support and resources to assist his/her advocacy		
	Understands how to obtain relevant confidential information		
	Understands the importance of partnering with his/her supervisor to develop goals and to discuss issues and assess progress		
	Understands the importance of participating in ongoing professional development to strengthen advocacy skills		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Communication	Knows how to effectively articulate a point of view while advocating for the needs of the child		
	Understands the importance of establishing trust and rapport with all parties		
	Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely		
	Knows how to work collaboratively and manage conflict effectively		
	Recognizes the importance of treating others with dignity and respect		
	Knows how to be an active listener		
	Understands and respects the perspectives, values and input from others		
	Knows the importance of being forthright, thorough and detail oriented		
	Knows how to utilize basic communication and interviewing skills		
	Knows strategies for interviewing children		
	Understands the elements of a court report		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Cultural Competence	Understands the extent to which cultural institutions and values may oppress, marginalize or alienate some individuals or groups and create or enhance privilege and power of others		
	Understands and demonstrates self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values when working with diverse groups		
	Knows strategies and steps to take to increase cultural competency skills and demonstrate culturally competent child advocacy		
	Understands how to recognize and challenge own biases		
	Understands the root causes of disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system and the disparate outcomes children of color experience		
	Knows how to be sensitive and responsive to different cultural differences		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Sound Judgment	Knows how to set healthy boundaries and respects the boundaries of others		
	Knows how to adhere to all policies, ethical guidelines and procedures		
	Recognizes the importance of flexibility in handling case-related changes		
	Understands managing challenges by collaborating based on the best interest of the child		
	Knows how to maintain objectivity and avoid making assumptions		
	Understands the importance of anticipating and recognizing potential problems		
	Understands making appropriate fact based recommendations to the court		
	Understands basing decisions on thorough review of the information		
	Understands evaluating alternative decisions		
	Understands the confidentiality requirements of being a CASA/GAL volunteer		
	Understands that your personal values and biases about mental illness, domestic violence and substance abuse can affect your objectivity		
	Knows how to evaluate what is in a child's best interest		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Initiative	Knows how to be self-motivated and work independently		
	Understands the importance of being resourceful and identifying needs as well as services to meet the needs		
	Recognizes the importance of ensuring all parties are moving expeditiously toward permanency		
	Knows the importance of persistence in pursuit of information		
	Understands the need to advocate for access to quality, individualized services		
	Understands the need to respectfully challenge the status quo		
	Recognizes the importance of creating innovative strategies to resolve issues		
Foundations of Knowledge			
	Understands the importance of using a strength-based approach		
	Understands concurrent planning		
	Understands advocacy differs dependent on the age of the child		
	Understands the options for permanence for a child		
	Understands how to identify a child's basic needs		
	Understands the cycle of attachment		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Foundations of Knowledge (cont'd)	Understands possible reactions to separation & loss		
	Understands age appropriate behavior and development for children of all ages		
	Understands how mental illness impacts families		
	Understands the factors that contribute to a child's resilience		
	Understands how poverty can impact families and children		
	Understands strategies to advocate for children and adolescents with mental health disorders		
	Understands the ways that substance abuse can affect children & families		
	Knows the importance of being aware of resources in the community that assist with substance abuse		
	Understands how domestic violence affects children & families		
	Understands the nature and scope of trauma and how it affects children		
	Understands the importance of resilience in overcoming trauma in children		
	Knows strategies to address educational challenges		
	Understands the issues faced by LGBTQ youth in the child welfare system		
	Understands the risk factors for child abuse and neglect		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Foundations of Knowledge (cont'd)	Understands the factors that contribute to child resilience		
	Recognizes the importance of understanding a child's journey through the child welfare system		
	Understands MSL and its importance when advocating for a child's best interest		
	Understands the nature and scope of the roles of others (e.g., caseworkers, attorneys, therapists, etc.)		
	Knows the importance of the federal laws that impact his/her advocacy		
	Understands what constitutes abuse and neglect		
Self Care			
	Understands the importance of healthy coping strategies to prevent burn out		
	Understands the importance of being aware of personal limitations		
	Understands the importance of setting clear, healthy boundaries and can identify indicators of stress		
	Understands the importance of maintaining a healthy life style		
	Understands the importance of knowing when to ask for and accept help		
	Understands the importance of maintaining a sense of hope and optimism		

Parameters for CASA/GAL Volunteer Relationships: Activity 1E



The facilitator will provide copies of the Volunteer-Child Relationship Dilemmas Worksheet. Working on your own, 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.

Volunteer-Child Relationship Dilemmas Worksheet Handout

Dilemma 1

As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you are on your way to your very first visit with a 9-year-old girl named Susan. Right before you leave, you call the paternal grandfather, who is caring for Susan, and find out that she just had some teeth pulled and some other dental work done. He mentioned the dentist prescribed some mild painkillers and antibiotics. He already phoned them in to the pharmacy, but he doesn't have a car to go get them. Since you pass the pharmacy on the way, he was wondering if you could swing by and pick them up. You think back to training and what you learned about providing transportation. The prescriptions are already paid for. Why not pick up a milkshake too? Susan's mouth is going to be sore from all the dental work, and this would be a great way to start out your relationship as her volunteer advocate. You know the milkshake may be too much, but . . . What do you do?

Crux of the dilemma

Potential consequences

Dilemma 1, Cont'd.

One possible solution

Dilemma 2

About eight months into a case, you are unable to reach Ms. Jones, the birth mother of the child for whom you're advocating. Johnny has been back in Ms. Jones's care for about three weeks. Ms. Jones successfully moved into her own apartment, so she had a separate residence from her on-again, off-again boyfriend. One of the parameters set forth in court was that the boyfriend was never to be at her apartment when Johnny was there, because he had not finished his court-ordered services. You've had a great relationship with Ms. Jones, and one day you spot her at a grocery store. You stop to make small talk and then leave the store. As you drive out of the parking lot, you see Ms. Jones getting in a car with her boyfriend. You know that the boyfriend is not supposed to have contact with Johnny, and you're worried that Ms. Jones has violated the court order. You also know that Ms. Jones usually gets home around 3:30, after getting Johnny from the bus stop. You really want to see her once more before your case goes back to court, and seeing Johnny again would really help you know how he is doing. You think, why not swing by today to see if you can grab a few moments with both of them to check in? That would allow you to provide the most up-to-date information in your report. You know you should call first, but often she hasn't returned your calls. What do you do?

Crux of the dilemma

Potential consequences

Dilemma 2, Cont'd.

One possible solution

Dilemma 3

You have been advocating for a 15-year-old girl named Jessie for more than a year. She has been moved to a residential placement in the central part of the state, about an hour away. Her father passed away when she was 9 years old, and her mother is currently in jail. She is an only child and has no visitors and no family support system. When you go to visit, you learn that her birthday is next week, and all she wants is to go to Olive Garden for dinner. You think about the best interest of the child and decide she would have no other way of celebrating her birthday. You know you shouldn't take her, but . . . What do you do?

Crux of the dilemma

Potential consequences

One possible solution

Dilemma 4

You have been advocating for a 16-year-old boy named Kyle for almost a year. You've come to know everyone involved in his life pretty well, including his stepmother, Beth, who Kyle looks up to like his own mother. Beth confides in you that she and Kyle's father have been arguing a lot and sometimes he hits her. She wants to get help, but she doesn't know what to do. You know the local domestic violence shelter would offer services, but Beth states that she doesn't feel comfortable disclosing this information to anyone else. Beth then says that she is worried about Kyle's father and his lack of anger management, because she has witnessed him "losing it" with Kyle during visitation. Beth is worried that if this information is revealed, Kyle's father might not be considered as a placement resource. What do you do?

Crux of the dilemma

Potential consequences

One possible solution

Dilemma 5

You have developed a great working relationship with Michele, the birth mother in your case. The case is going well, and there is talk of returning all four of her children home. At this time, the agency's only concern is that Michele's budget is very tight; she will have to maintain employment in order to make ends meet. She has an unsteady employment history and has previously disclosed that she is stressed about the idea of having all four children return home at once. One day you are meeting with Michele when she leans in close and says she has a secret. She asks you to "pinky swear"

Dilemma 5, Cont'd.

that you won't tell anyone. You really want to find out what the secret is, but you also don't want to break Michele's trust. She leans in to tell you that she is expecting another child and will have to leave her job to prepare for the birth of the new baby. What do you do?

Crux of the dilemma

Potential consequences

One possible solution

Dilemma 6

You have been working with a teenage sibling group for almost a year. Yolanda, the youngest of the four siblings, is at a local youth shelter after running away from her former placement to see her sisters, who are all placed in another county. You are at the shelter for a visit and a team meeting with the shelter staff to discuss Yolanda's case. During the meeting, Yolanda becomes so upset that she runs out of the shelter and goes to her sister's foster home nearby. You accompany staff to the foster home in an effort to persuade Yolanda to return voluntarily to the shelter. Yolanda agrees to cooperate with the staff, but upon her return, she confides in you that she is lonely and doesn't have anyone to talk to. She isn't allowed to use the phone after a certain hour, and she'd like to have a cell phone to stay in contact with her sisters. She asks you to purchase one for her. What do you do?

Dilemma 6, Cont'd.

Crux of the dilemma

Potential consequences

One possible solution

Dilemma 7

You have recently been appointed to the case of an 8-year-old boy who was recently placed into a group home due to destructive behavior. The social worker advises you that he is in a three-week black-out period, during which he can neither have visitors nor participate in any outside activities. You think this is grossly unfair to the child. You've addressed your concerns with the group-home staff, the caseworker and the child's attorney. You've even included it in your court report, to no avail. You tell the social worker how disappointed you are that they aren't doing their job. The conversation goes nowhere, and you are even more frustrated. You decide to go home to unwind. While searching the Internet, you come across a Facebook page for child advocates. You think to yourself that this would be a great opportunity to voice your frustrations to other like-minded individuals, but you know you can't provide any information that would compromise confidentiality. What do you do?

Crux of the dilemma

Dilemma 7, Cont'd.

Potential consequence

One possible solution

The Child Welfare System

Child Welfare Laws: Activity 1F

Share any questions you have on the key child protection laws that guide CASA/GAL volunteer work. Participate in a discussion on the foundational concepts of permanency, reasonable efforts and culturally appropriate advocacy. Share any questions you noted as you read the Child Welfare History handout prior to training.

Cultural Considerations



The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), passed in 1978, recognizes that Indian children* have special rights as members of sovereign nations within the United States. The law was written in response to Congressional hearings in the 1970s that revealed a pattern of public and private removal of Indian children from their homes, undermining their families and threatening tribal survival and Native American cultures. Designed to implement the federal government's trust responsibility to the nations by protecting and preserving the bond between Indian children and their tribe and culture, ICWA sets up placement preference schemes for children who have been determined to be Indian children and establishes the right of certain entities to appear as parties, including the tribe and the Indian custodian, if one exists.

*This curriculum uses the terms "Indian child/ren" and "Indian custodian" in accordance with the legal definitions set out in the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The Child Welfare System: Activity 1G



Part 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.

Part 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 write in information relevant to your jurisdiction. If you have questions, share them in the large group.

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 _____

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

CASA/GAL VOLUNTEER

In my area this person is called _____

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
- Makes recommendations to the court
- 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: _____

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

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

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

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

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

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
- 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

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

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

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

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

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

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 to the attention of the court culturally relevant service options and dispositional recommendations
- 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 it is 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

Who Participates in a Case, Cont'd.

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 the 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)

Working a Case

Introduction to the Court Report: Activity 1H

Listen as the facilitator describes the CASA/GAL court report and offers tips for writing an effective report.

An Introduction to the CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report



The CASA/GAL volunteer court report is the most essential aspect of your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer. The report outlines, in a standard format, what the CASA/GAL volunteer has discovered, the volunteer's assessment of the child's situation and what the court needs to do to help the child achieve a safe, permanent home. It is your primary tool in effectively communicating the child's perspective. The report also ensures professionalism, consistency and objectivity.

The court report is the vehicle through which you present the information you have gathered about a child's situation and your recommendations about what services will meet the child's needs. The facts stated throughout the report are the foundation of your recommendations and should be clear, concise, and easily distinguished from opinions and assumption. When writing the document, it is imperative to respect all of the individuals involved in the case. A report written from an honest and objective view can eliminate defensive attitudes and ease implementation of the recommendations. You will have greater success defending your written documentation and representing the best interests of the child if the report is free from bias.

Court reports provide visible documentation of your involvement in the case. Court reports that provide visible documentation of your involvement and that are presented in a consistent format increase your ability to give children a voice in the decision-making process.

Judges rely on the information in CASA/GAL volunteer court reports as they make their decisions. You will submit reports for most hearings. The CASA/GAL volunteer court report provides a way to systematically organize pertinent information and give the court a clear mental image of the child's situation. Most of the information the court receives is derived from your written documentation, which is made record at each court hearing. CASA/GAL volunteer court reports are shared with all parties to a case and any other individuals who are authorized by law to receive them.

All CASA/GAL programs require that court reports be submitted to the CASA/GAL program office prior to court. Staff will review all CASA/GAL volunteer court reports to ensure the recommendations are supported by facts and all relevant information and documentation has been included. Staff may make suggestions about wording to make your report clearer.

An Introduction to the CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report, Cont'd.

Keys to a Successful Report

- Be thorough and specific.
- Get your information firsthand.
- Report the facts.
- Make specific recommendations that flow from the facts.
- Use the court report format provided by your program (which you will learn about in the next chapter).
- Submit your report on time so CASA/GAL program staff can review and comment on your report.

Chapter Wrap-Up

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter.

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 1 Volunteer Training Evaluation and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Chapter 2 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 2 training session, complete the following assignments:

Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics

Read the statistics about child abuse and neglect, located in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work Handouts packet.

How Children Grow and Develop

Read information on how children grow and develop, located in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work Handouts packet.

Children's Needs

Read information on children's needs, located in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work Handouts packet.

Attachment and Examples

Read through the information about the importance of attachment in child development and the risks for children who lose the ability to attach to a parent or caretaker in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work Handouts packet. Review the examples of specific children who never had a healthy attachment to their caretaker.

Child Abuse and Neglect Chart and Laws

Read the information about child abuse and neglect, including the chart, which describes different kinds of abuse and lists indicators in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work Handouts packet.

Chapter 2 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

Also read about state's legal definition of abuse, mandatory reporting laws and your program's policies regarding reporting suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

Risk Factors for Child Abuse and Neglect

Read about the multiple risk factors for child abuse and neglect in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work Handouts packet.

Court Report Template

Go through the court report template in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work packet.

Court Report for the Bleux Case

Read the sample court report for the Bleux case in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work Handouts packet. You will be applying what you know about the Bleux case during various activities in the next chapter.





CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

CASA/GAL Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

Volunteer Manual

CHAPTER TWO

HEARST *foundations*



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CHAPTER 2:


The Well-Being of the Child


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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 2: Pre-Work







Read through the pre-work packet, which gives you a foundation in:

- ✓ Children's growth and development
- ✓ Children's needs
- ✓ The importance of attachment in childhood
- ✓ Recognizing child abuse and neglect
- ✓ Your state's abuse definition and mandatory reporting laws
- ✓ Risk factors for child abuse and neglect
- ✓ Our program's court report template
- ✓ Sample court report for Bleux case

3

Prior to this training session, you should have completed the reading assignments in the Chapter 2 Pre-Work packet that gave you a foundation in children's growth and development, children's needs, the importance of attachment in childhood, recognizing child abuse and neglect, your state's definition of abuse and mandatory reporting laws, risk factors for child abuse and neglect and your program's court report.

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter gives an overview of the needs and development of children and describes what constitutes child abuse and neglect, including indicators and risk factors.

Competency Building in Chapter 2	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills & Attributes Development in Chapter 2
Foundations of Knowledge	<p>Understands age-appropriate behavior and the development of children</p> <p>Understands a child’s basic needs</p> <p>Understands why the MSL standard is in the best interest of children</p> <p>Understands the cycle of attachment</p> <p>Understands what constitutes abuse and neglect</p> <p>Understands risk factors for child abuse and neglect</p> <p>Understands the benefits and steps to using a strength-based approach</p>
Sound Judgment	<p>Knows how to evaluate what is in the child’s best interest</p>
Communication	<p>Understands the elements of a court report</p>

Ages and Stages: Activity 2A



In your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer, it is important to be able to assess age-appropriate behavior for children from birth through adolescence. The facilitator will divide you into pairs and give each pair an envelope that contains cards with behaviors written on them. Several different age groups' behaviors are represented in each envelope. Determine the appropriate age category for each of your cards and place the card under the corresponding sign for that age group. After all pairs have finished placing their cards under the corresponding age group signs, the facilitator will distribute a chart listing developmental milestones for each age category. In the large group, go around to each age category and discuss what you learned and any questions you have.

Children's Needs: Activity 2B



In order to grow and develop optimally, children must have their needs met appropriately. In speaking for children in the foster care system, it is imperative that you recognize the full range of children's needs.

Part 1: The facilitator will divide the class into four groups and give each group a handout representing a category of children's needs: physical, emotional, developmental or cultural. Working in your group, think back to the Bleux case and to the child development information from the previous activity, and write a list of Deshawn Bleux's needs for your assigned category on your handout. Once you have completed your list, attach your list to the flipchart at the front of the room.

Part 2: Recall the Pre-Work reading assignment on children's needs. In the large group, consider Deshawn Bleux's needs listed on the flipchart. Discuss the following questions:

- What other needs would you add to this list in light of the information you read in your Pre-Work?
- Which of the needs listed would you identify as child protection issues?
- How might the needs of two 5-year-old children be both the same and different?

Attachment: Activity 2C



Listen as the facilitator briefly recalls information from your Pre-Work about the importance of attachment in child development and the risks for children who lag developmentally or lose the ability to attach to a parent or caretaker. When the facilitator gives examples of specific children who never had a healthy attachment to their caretaker or have had that attachment broken, discuss where in the cycle the attachment was broken. In the large group, share any questions you have.

Minimum Sufficient Level (MSL) of Care: Activity 2D

Part 1: Read the summary below describing minimum sufficient level of care, the bottom-line standard for a child to remain in his/her home. In your small groups, answer the following questions.

- What do children really need? College? Clothes? A bath every day?
- How might a child's needs vary depending on his/her circumstances?
- What issues should be considered in determining if a parent can provide a minimum sufficient level of care?
- How do you think the MSL standard benefits children?

In the large group, share some of your responses.

Part 2: Listen as the facilitator discusses the ethical responsibility to ensure children's most basic needs are being met, while allowing space for cultural and individual differences if those needs are being met.

Listen as the facilitator reads the following statement:

Some people believe that the best place for children to grow up is in their own homes, with their own families—even if a foster family can provide material things that the children will never have if they are returned home.

Share your thoughts about this statement.

What Is “Minimum Sufficient Level of Care” (MSL)?



Removing a child from his or her home because of abuse and/or neglect is a drastic remedy. Because removal is so traumatic for the child, both the law and good practice require that agencies keep the child in the home when it is possible to do so and still keep the child safe. Children should be removed only when parents cannot provide the minimum sufficient level of care. This standard describes what must be in place for the child to remain in the home. The same standard is also used to determine whether or not parents have made sufficient progress so that a child can be safely returned to the family home. The minimum sufficient level of care is determined by a number of factors, each of which must be looked at specifically in relation to the case at hand.

Factors to consider include:

The Child's Needs

Is the parent providing for the following needs at a basic level?

- Physical (food, clothing, shelter, medical care, safety, protection)
- Emotional (attachment between parent and child)
- Developmental (education, special help for children with disabilities)

Social Standards

Is the parent's behavior, within or outside, considered as commonly accepted child-rearing practices in our society?

Here are some examples: In terms of discipline, whipping a child with a belt was generally thought to be appropriate during the first half of the twentieth century, but is now widely considered abusive. Contemporary families frequently use a short “time out” as a punishment for young children. In terms of school attendance, it is a widely held expectation that parents send all children to school (or homeschool them) until they reach the age limit at which attendance is no longer compulsory. Social standards also apply in medical care, where immunizations and regular medical/dental care are the standard.

What Is “Minimum Sufficient Level of Care” (MSL), Cont’d.

Community Standards

Does the parent’s behavior fall within reasonable limits, given the specific community in which the family resides?

Here are some examples: The age at which a child can be safely left alone varies significantly from urban to suburban to rural communities. The age at which a child is deemed old enough to care for other children is largely determined by cultural and community norms. Even something as simple as sending a 9-year-old child to the store might fall within or outside those standards, depending on neighborhood safety, the distance and traffic patterns, the weather, the child’s clothing, the time of day or night, the ability of the child and the necessity of the purchase.

Communities can be geographical or cultural. An example of a non-geographical, cultural community is a Native American tribe in which members live in a variety of locales, but still share a common child-rearing standard. According to the Indian Child Welfare Act, the minimum sufficient level of care standard must reflect the community standards of the child’s tribe.

WHY THE MSL STANDARD IS USED

- It maintains the child’s right to safety and permanence while not ignoring the parents’ right to raise their children.
- It is required by law (as a practical way to interpret the “reasonable efforts” provision of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act).
- It is possible for parents to reach.
- It provides a reference point for decision makers.
- It protects (to some degree) from individual biases and value judgments.
- It discourages unnecessary removal from the family home.
- It discourages unnecessarily long placements in foster care.
- It keeps decision makers focused on what is the least detrimental alternative for the child.
- It is sensitive across cultures.

What Is “Minimum Sufficient Level of Care” (MSL), Cont’d.

KEY PARAMETERS OF THE MSL STANDARD

- The standard takes into consideration the particular circumstances and needs of each child.
- It is a set of minimum conditions, not an ideal situation.
- It is a relative standard, depending on the child’s needs, social standards and community standards. It will not be the same for every family or every child in a particular family.
- It remains the same when considering removal and when considering reunification.

Cultural Considerations

An understanding of a child’s cultural practices is important when considering the MSL standard. For children who are Alaska Native or American Indian, sources for information about cultural practices may include the parents, the tribal child welfare worker, relatives of the child or other tribal members. For other ideas for making sure MSL is applied consistently, you may consider:

- Discussing the MSL standard with your case coordinator or supervisor
- Learning about the various cultural groups in your community (more on this in Chapter 6)
- Systematically comparing the standard for removal and the standard for reunifying a child in the home of origin

Child Abuse and Neglect

The “Best Interest” Principle: Activity 2E

In addition to MSL standards, the “best interest” principle guides your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Listen as the facilitator introduces this principle and your role in advocating for a child’s best interest.

The “Best Interest” Principle—What It Means

- A safe home
- A permanent home
- As quickly as possible

Parents typically decide what is best for their children and then provide it for them to the extent that they can. They are their children’s best advocates. The child protection system intervenes in families’ lives when parents cannot or will not protect, promote and provide for their children’s basic needs. A CASA/GAL volunteer becomes the advocate when the parents cannot—or will not—fulfill this role.

Judges use the “best interest of the child” standard when making their decisions in child abuse and neglect cases. Child welfare and juvenile court practitioners and scholars have debated the meaning of “best interest of the child” for years. Books have been written on the subject; however, there is still no concise legal definition for this standard.

In cases where the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies, the law presumes that it is always in the best interest of an Indian child to have the tribe determine what is best for the child’s future.

The Best Interest Principle: What the National CASA Association Says

The CASA/GAL volunteer is guided by the “best interest” principle when advocating for a child. This means that the volunteer knows the child well enough to identify the child’s needs. The volunteer makes fact-based recommendations to the court about appropriate resources to meet those

The “Best Interest” Principle—What It Means, Cont’d.

needs and informs the court of the child’s wishes, whether or not those wishes are, in the opinion of the CASA/GAL volunteer, in the child’s best interest.

What a CASA/GAL Volunteer Can Do

Throughout a case, ask yourself the following questions to help determine what’s in a child’s best interest:

- Is the child safe?
- Is the child’s unique culture being respected?
- What are the special needs of this child?
- Is the child’s sense of time being honored?
- Is the child receiving the emotional nurturance necessary for healthy brain development?
- Can this child speak for himself/herself?
- Should the child be present in court?

Child Abuse and Neglect: Activity 2F

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

Share any questions you have on recognizing child abuse and neglect or your state's definition of abuse or mandatory reporting laws you read about in your Pre-Work.

Risk Factors for Child Abuse and Neglect: Activity 2G



Part 1: Listen as the facilitator summarizes key information from the risk factors for child abuse and neglect information you read as part of your Pre-Work. Then the facilitator will assign you to groups and assign a particular category of risk factor. Working in your small groups, list the factors in your category that were present in the Bleux case. Report your group's findings back to the large group.

Part 2: In the large group, discuss what types of services or interventions should be implemented to alleviate the issues in the Bleux family.

Family Strengths and Weaknesses:

Activity 2H



Part 1: Take a few moments to think about your own family (either your family of origin or your current family). Try to focus on one event in particular that illustrates the strengths in your family, and then think of an event that exemplifies the weaknesses or deficits. Write down one strength and one weakness of your family. When you are finished writing, share your responses with a partner.

Family Strength: _____

Family Weakness: _____

Part 2: Listen as the facilitator presents information about the difference between using a resource lens and a deficit lens in your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer and the importance of understanding that strengths may look different in different cultures. In the large group, answer the following questions:

- What might be some benefits of using a strengths-based approach in your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer?
- What might be some of the drawbacks of using a strengths-based approach?

Part 3: Read through the entries on the Strengths in Families Worksheet, which follows the information about the different lenses you can use as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Watch as the facilitator plays a video about the Bleux case. As you watch, try to identify strengths of the Bleux family. Not all programs will provide an opportunity for you to visit with or talk to parents. Watch the video for tone, body language and other techniques that can be used in all interviews – with parents, foster parents, relatives, teachers and so on. The techniques depicted in the video are transferable to all interviews. In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- Based on both the video and the case notes, which of the strengths listed are present in the Bleux family?

Family Strengths and Weaknesses, Cont'd.

- If you don't know whether or not a particular strength exists in this family, how might you gather information to find out?
- How would looking only at strengths or only at deficits affect your recommendations for this family?

Resources vs. Deficits	
If I look through a RESOURCES lens, I am likely to...	If I look through a DEFICITS lens, I am likely to...
Look for positive aspects	Look for negative aspects
Empower families	Take control or rescue
Create options	Give ultimatums or advice
Listen	Tell
Focus on strengths	Focus on problems
Put the responsibility on the family	See the family as incapable
Acknowledge progress	Wait for the finished product
See the family as experts	See service providers as experts
See the family invested in change	Impose change or limits
Help identify resources	Expect inaction or failure
Avoid labeling	Label
Inspire with hope	Deflate the family's hope

*Adapted from materials developed by CASA for Children, Inc.,
Portland, Oregon.*

Seeing the Strengths and Resources in Families



Your ability to identify strengths in families depends partially on which lens—the resource lens or the deficit lens—you use in your work with families. The lens you choose will also influence your work with others involved in the case. Using a strengths-based approach means acknowledging the resources that exist within a family (including extended family) and tapping into them. For instance, you may identify a relative who can provide a temporary or permanent home for a child, you may help a parent reconnect with a past support system or you may identify healthy adults who in the past were important to a child or family. Using a resource lens creates more options for resolution, and it empowers and supports children and families.

Following are a few questions you can ask when using the resource lens to assess a family:

- How has this family solved problems in the past?
- What court-ordered activities have family members completed?
- Does the family have extended family or non-relative kin who could be a resource?
- How are family members coping with their present circumstances?

Cultural Considerations

Strengths don't look the same in every family. Family structures, rules, roles, customs, boundaries, communication styles, problem-solving approaches, parenting techniques and values may be based on cultural norms and/or accepted community standards.

For instance, in a deficit model, a family with a female head of household may be viewed as dysfunctional or even immoral. But using a resources lens, the female-head-of-household structure is appreciated for the strength and survival skills of the mother, and there is a deeper examination of historical and institutional factors that have contributed to the existence of matriarchal families.

In another example, many Western cultures believe that children should have a bed to themselves, if not an entire room. In contrast, many other cultures believe that such a practice is detrimental to a child's development and

Seeing the Strengths and Resources in Families, Cont'd.

potentially dangerous. Additionally, in the United States the ideal of the nuclear family dominates. However, in many communities, extended family have a greater role in childrearing and family may include members of a faith community or others who are not blood relatives.

People in different cultures and socioeconomic classes may use different skills and resources to deal with stress and problems. Material goods are one kind of resource, but some individuals and cultures prize other resources above material wealth. For example:

- Mental ability allows for the access and use of information.
- Emotional resources provide support and strength in difficult times.
- Spiritual resources give purpose and meaning to people's lives.
- Good health and physical mobility allow for self-sufficiency.
- Cultural heritage provides context, values and morals for living in the world.
- Informal support systems provide a safety net (e.g., money in tight times, care for a sick child, job advice).
- Healthy relationships nurture and support.
- Role models provide appropriate examples of and practical advice on achieving success.

Strengths in Families Worksheet

Parent-Child Relationship

These items focus on the parent's relationship with the child. To accurately assess the parent-child bond, it is important to know the attachment behaviors of the parent's culture. How does this culture display empathy? What are appropriate verbal and nonverbal cues? For example, language is highly valued in some groups, and not in others. Eye contact between parent and child is expected by some but considered disrespectful by others.

Yes	No	Unknown		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	The parent shows empathy for the child.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	The parent responds appropriately to the child's verbal and nonverbal signals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	The parent is able to put the child's needs ahead of his/her own.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	When they are together, the child shows comfort in the parent.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	The parent has raised the child for a significant period of time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	In the past, the parent has met the child's basic physical and emotional needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	The parent accepts some responsibility for the problems that brought the child into care or to the attention of the authorities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	The parent uses positive, nonviolent discipline.

Strengths in Families Worksheet

Parental Support System

These items reflect the quality of the parent's relationships with his/her current support system. The ways in which support systems function vary depending on culture. Because of the value European American culture places on self-sufficiency and independence, parents are expected to make their own decisions, live independently and use the family for emotional support. Other cultures, most notably Native American cultures, expect the total group, biologically related or not, to function collectively to resolve problems. Resolution of problems may lie in the hands of the elders in other ethnic groups.

Yes	No	Unknown		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	The parent has positive, significant relationships with other healthy adults (e.g., spouse, parents, friends, relatives).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	The parent has a meaningful support system that can help him/her (e.g., church, job, counselor).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11	Extended family is nearby and capable of providing support.

Strengths in Families Worksheet

Past Support System

The next five items look at extended family and friendships that have been helpful in the past and can be tapped again. If the family system has demonstrated healthy coping abilities in the past, consistent with their cultural norms, this may be a resource for the family in the present as well.

Yes	No	Unknown		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12	Extended family history shows family members able to help appropriately when one member is not functioning well.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13	Relatives came forward to offer help when the child needed placement.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	Relatives have followed through on commitments in the past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	Significant other adults (who are not blood relatives) have followed through on commitments in the past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16	Significant other adults (who are not blood relatives) have followed through on commitments in the past.

Family History

These items look at the parent's history and cultural heritage. To answer the first item in this section, it is important to know to what extent the family has identified with and participated in its ethnic community.

Yes	No	Unknown		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17	The family's ethnic, cultural or religious heritage includes an emphasis on mutual caretaking and shared parenting in times of crisis.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	The parent's childhood history shows consistency of parental caretaker.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	The parent's history shows evidence of his/her childhood needs being met adequately.

Strengths in Families Worksheet

Parent's Self-Care

The items in this category highlight the parent's ability to function in an adult mode, according to the expectations of his/her culture. Values regarding health, hygiene, housing, education and employment differ from culture to culture, so knowledge about the parent's culture is vital to identifying strengths.

Yes	No	Unknown		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	The parent's general health is good.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	The parent uses medical care for self appropriately.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	The parent's hygiene and grooming are consistently adequate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	The parent has a history of stability in housing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	The parent has a solid employment history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	25	The parent has graduated from high school or possesses a GED.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26	The parent has skills that contribute to employability.

Strengths in Families Worksheet

Child's Development

Finally, these last five items focus on the functioning of the child. Again, appropriate behavior and social skills vary between cultures, so cultural knowledge is necessary.

Yes	No	Unknown		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27	The child shows age-appropriate cognitive abilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28	The child demonstrates an age-appropriate attention span.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29	The child shows evidence of conscience development.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	The child has appropriate social skills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	31	Major behavioral problems are absent.

Adapted from Concurrent Planning: From Permanency Planning to Permanency Action,

*Linda Katz, Norma Spoonemore, and Chris Robinson,
Seattle: Lutheran Social Services of Washington and Idaho, 1999*

Working a Case

Asking the Right Questions and Planning Your Next Steps: Activity 2I

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator gives a brief recap of the Bleux case, which you read prior to training in your Chapter 1 Pre-Work. Then review the list of questions about the Bleux family that you developed while completing that Pre-Work. In small groups, read the Case Assessment Questions handout and identify additional questions you want answered, as well as possible sources for the information. Then, in the large group, come up with a list of your top-priority questions for the Bleux case.

Part 2: In the large group, plot out your next steps for working on the Bleux case.

Key Elements of the CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report: Activity 2J



Part 1: The facilitator will provide a copy of your local court report template. You should have reviewed this template already in your Pre-Work. Follow along as the facilitator gives a brief overview of each section of the report and its purpose. The facilitator will also explain how to submit your report to the CASA/GAL program office, including deadlines for submission.

Part 2: Listen as the facilitator highlights tips for writing effective court reports. Then, on your own, review the sample court report for the Bleux case, which you read in your Pre-Work. Answer the following questions:

- Was the report organized, grammatically correct, factual, objective, concise and conclusive of what's in the child's best interest?
- Are there questions that were unanswered?
- Are the recommendations supported by facts/concerns that are highlighted in the report?
- Do the recommendations follow logically from other information stated in the report?
- Are there other pieces of information that should have been included?
- If you were the CASA/GAL volunteer on this case, are there other people that you would have liked to interview or documents that you would have liked to review to support your recommendations?
- Based on the report do you feel that the judge would be able to make a decision in the best interest of the child?

In the large group, share your thoughts about the report.

Key Elements of a CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report



Identifying Information

Include the child's name, ethnicity, tribal enrollment status (if family is of Native American ancestry), the case number, the petition date and the hearing type.

CASA/GAL Volunteer Activity

Describe visits with the child (how many, dates and places), contacts with others involved in the case (dates and type) and reports or records requested or reviewed.

Brief Family Background/Reason for Removal

Briefly recount the incidents leading up to the removal, including reasons the child came into care and history of referrals or arrests related to child's removal.

Placement Information

Briefly describe how many and what types of placements have occurred since the child was taken into custody, including dates and lengths of stay.

Case Plan

Describe basic elements of the case plan.

Case Status

Describe parental progress (or lack thereof) toward the case plan and agency compliance with the goals of the case plan, including whether reasonable efforts have been made.

Status of the Child

Describe how the child is doing in school, the physical and social development of the child, the health of the child, whether the child is in therapy (and if so, for what), independent-living services that are being provided to the child (if relevant), whether and how the child's cultural needs (if any) are being met and the child's expressed wishes.

Key Elements of a CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report, Cont'd.

Family and Community Resources

Describe strengths, skills or previous successful coping instances of the biological family and any resources within the extended family to provide connection, respite or additional help. Identify community resources that might provide additional support or services.

Issues and Concerns

Consider addressing any of the following:

- The case and/or permanency plan, including obstacles to its implementation
- Current or continuing problems in the case
- Participation in and progress of provided services; services still needed
- Ability of current placement to meet child's needs
- Visitation or lack of visitation

Best Interest Recommendations

Provide a short list of recommendations to meet the child's needs that are specific and are based on information previously documented.

Recommendations should include, but not be limited to, placement, services and permanence.

Tips on Writing Effective Court Reports

In writing a report, the following steps are imperative:

- Use the court report format provided to you in training.
- Begin to work on the report at the beginning of your information gathering.
- Maintain detailed and chronological notes.
- Make the report child-centered.
- Be accurate. This means presenting exact information, free from unfamiliar acronyms, grammatical errors and misstatements.
- Check your spelling—not only in the body of the report, but also the names and titles cited in the report.
- Use the active voice ("CASA/GAL volunteer visited the home...").

Key Elements of a CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report, Cont'd.

- Report objectively and factually; eliminate opinions or diagnoses.
- Use quotations if you have them, but make sure they are accurate in word and citation.
- Use the fewest number of words possible to describe an action or occurrence.
- Eliminate negative emotions/subjective phrases, check for personal bias and refrain from inserting personal judgments.
- Relay only the most relevant and pertinent information.
- Do not transcribe information from other reports directly into your report; paraphrase information using your own words.
- Report incidents in chronological order of occurrence. The report should be uniform, flow from section to section and be easy to understand.
- Do not assume the reader knows the information you know.
- Ensure the basis for recommendations are supported by detailing the observations and information that led to those conclusions.
- Make sure to address placement, permanency, visitation, education, physical and mental health, necessary services for the child or family and the child's wishes.
- Ensure that the report addresses the case plan and any information about court-ordered services, actions, etc.
- Consider the hearing type and what recommendations are appropriate/timely.
- Scrutinize your report as the parties' attorneys will; do not leave room for unanswered questions.
- Play devil's advocate: Question subjective opinions and push for compelling arguments.
- Submit your report according to the deadline. Keep in mind that the report has to be edited and filed in a timely manner for dissemination to all parties.
- After submission, talk with your volunteer supervisor to discuss ways to improve report writing and be open to constructive criticism.

Key Elements of a CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report, Cont'd.

Ask yourself the following questions before submission:

- Was the report organized, grammatically correct, factual, objective, concise and conclusive of what's in the child's best interest?
- Are there questions that were unanswered?
- Are the recommendations supported by facts/concerns that are highlighted in the report?
- Do the recommendations flow logically from other information stated in the report?
- Are there other pieces of information that should have been included?
- If you were the CASA/GAL volunteer on this case, are there other people that you would have liked to interview or documents that you would have liked to review to support your recommendations?
- Based on the report, do you feel that the judge would be able to make a decision in the best interest of the child?

Using Child Photos in Court Reports

Many court and CASA/GAL programs believe that photos of the child should be present in the courtroom. The easiest way to make that happen is to include a photo of the child as a cover page in the CASA/GAL volunteer court report. Often, every party is present in the courtroom except the child. As the child's advocate, the CASA/GAL volunteer can help ensure that the child is the focus of every proceeding; a photo is an ever-present reminder of whose life is at the heart of the matter before the court. The facilitator will share whether it is part of your local program's practices to include a child's photograph in the court report.

Chapter Wrap-up

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter.

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 2 Volunteer Training Evaluation and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Chapter 3 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 3 training session, complete the following assignments:

Shane's Story video

Watch the Shane's story video and prepare a list of traumatic experiences for a child.

Understanding Child Trauma

Read the information on Understanding Child Trauma in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet. (This information is for Activity 3B.)

Basics of Elements of Communication

Read the information on the Basic Elements of Communication – Communication and CASA/Gal Volunteer Work in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet. (This information is for Activity 3F.)

Open-Ended vs. Closed-Ended Questions

Read the information on open-ended and closed-ended questions in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet. (This information is for Activity 3G.)

CASA/GAL Interview

Read the information on CASA/GAL Interview in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet. (This information is for Activity 3H.)

Chapter 3 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

The Black-Smith Case

Read the Initial Case Notes for the Black-Smith Case, which the facilitator will distribute. You will be applying what you know about the Black-Smith case during various activities in the Chapter 3 training session.

Interviewing a Child

Watch Part 1 of the video showing a CASA/GAL volunteer interviewing a 4-year-old child, which appears in the Chapter 3 Online Resources. (The video is 4 minutes, 30 seconds.) Then, using the Interviewing a Child Assignment Sheet distributed by the facilitator, design and conduct a brief interview with a child between the ages of 5 and 17 before the Chapter 3 session. Be sure to get permission from the child's parent(s) before the interview.

First Impressions Video

Watch the video First Impressions: Exposure to Violence and a Child's Developing Brain, which appears in the Chapter 3 Online Resources. (The video is 14 minutes, 43 seconds.)





CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

CASA/GAL Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

Volunteer Manual

CHAPTER THREE

HEARST *foundations*



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CHAPTER 3:


Trauma, Resilience and Communication Skills


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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 3: Pre-Work





- ✓ Watch the Shane's Story video and prepare a list of traumatic experiences for a child.
- ✓ Read information on understanding child trauma.
- ✓ Read information on basic elements of communication – communication and CASA/GAL volunteer work.
- ✓ Read the information on open-ended and closed ended questions in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet. (This information is for Activity 3G.)
- ✓ Read the information on CASA/GAL Interview in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet. (This information is for Activity 3H.)

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Prior to this training session, you should have completed the following Pre-Work assignments:

- Watch the Shane's Story video and prepare a list of traumatic experiences for a child.
- Read information on understanding child trauma.
- Read information on basic elements of communication – communication and CASA/GAL volunteer work.
- Read the information on open-ended and closed-ended questions in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet.
- Read the information on CASA/GAL Interview in the Chapter 3 Pre-Work packet.
- Read the initial case notes for the Black-Smith case.
- Watch Part 1 of the video showing a CASA/GAL volunteer interviewing a 4-year-old child. Then design a brief interview with a child.
- Watch the video First Impressions: Exposure to Violence and a Child's Developing Brain.

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter focuses on trauma and resilience as it relates to the children you'll work with as a CASA/GAL volunteer. This chapter also offers an overview of communication and interviewing skills and practice writing effective recommendations to the court.

Below are the competencies that will be developed in Chapter 3.

Competency Building in Chapter 3	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills & Attributes Development in Chapter 3
CASA/GAL Role	
Foundation of Knowledge	Understands the nature and scope of trauma and how it affects children Understands possible reactions of children to separation and loss Understands the importance of resilience in overcoming trauma in children
Sound Judgment	Understands how to make appropriate fact-based recommendations to the court
Communication	Knows how to utilize basic communication and interviewing skills Knows strategies for interviewing children

Preparing to Talk About Trauma: Activity 3A

Part 1: Listen as a volunteer reads the quote by Walt Whitman. Think about what these words mean to you. The facilitator will ask a few participants to share responses.

There was a child went forth every day;
And the first object he look'd upon, the object he became;
And that object became part of him for the day, or a certain part of the day, or
for many years, or stretching cycles of years.

Walt Whitman

Part 2: Listen as the facilitator introduces the concept of the “feelings thermometer,” which is described below.

The Feelings Thermometer



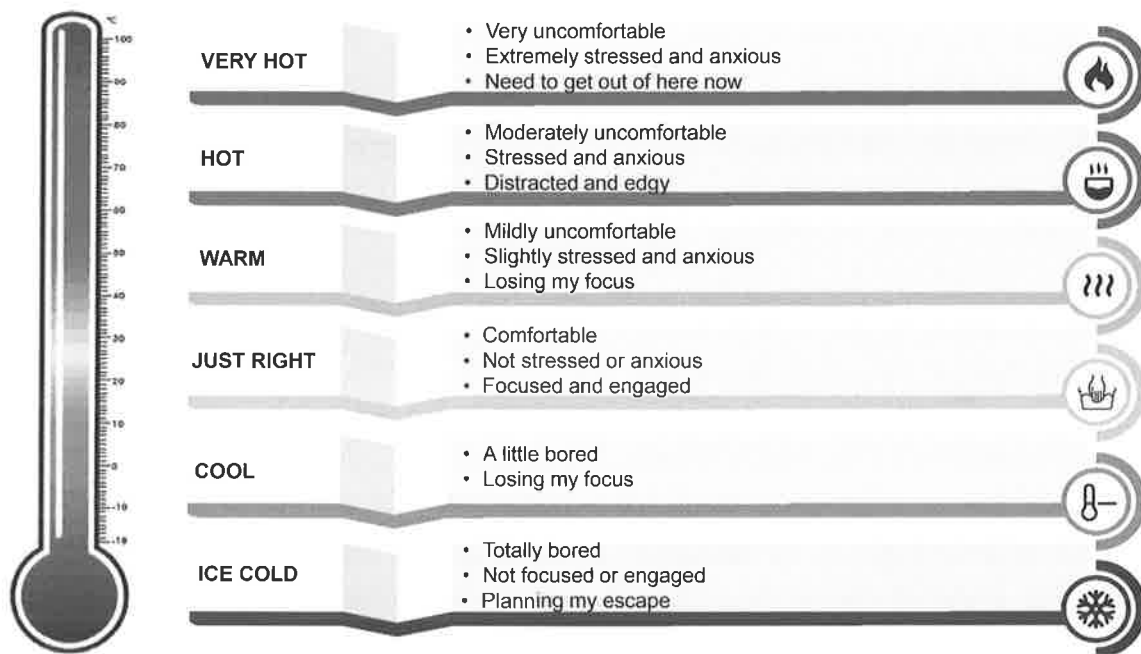
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) has developed the concept of a “feelings thermometer” to gauge your “emotional temperature” or response to what you’re learning about. In their training for parents caring for children who have experienced trauma, NCTSN writes:

The Feelings Thermometer . . . [can] make you more aware of the topics or situations that push your buttons, and how you react when your buttons are pushed. With this awareness, you may be able to anticipate situations that are going to raise your emotional temperature, and come up with a game plan for coping with them. When your Feelings Thermometer goes way up, that means you’re feeling stressed, anxious, and feel the need to escape. You also may find that when you become very uncomfortable, you “space out” and withdraw from the discussion. . . .[S]pacing out or withdrawing is something that traumatized kids do sometimes as well. What looks like boredom, or just not caring, or withdrawal can sometimes be a reaction to trauma.

NCTSN, Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma, February 2010.

The Feelings Thermometer, Cont'd.

As you begin to explore the topic of trauma, be aware that your feelings about any personal trauma you or someone you are close to has experienced, may be heightened. If you find that your “feelings thermometer” is running high and it may be affecting your role as an advocate, please address your concerns with CASA/GAL program staff.



What is Child Trauma? Activity 3B

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator gives an overview of the information that you read about childhood trauma as Pre-Work. Share one traumatic experience from the list of traumatic experiences for a child that you came prepared with.

Part 2: Recall the video of Shane's story from Facing Foster Care in Alaska. Consider the kinds of trauma Shane experienced that led to his involvement with the child protection services system. In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- What trauma did Shane experience before entering the system? After?

The Long-Term Effects of Childhood Trauma: Activity 3C



Watch the video about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. Then read the ACEs infographic with the ACE Score sheet filled out for Francis, the mother in the Black-Smith case. In small groups, discuss the following questions:

- What long-term effects might the unresolved trauma have on Francis' health and well-being?
- What ACE score does Tammy, the older daughter in the Black-Smith case, have now? What ACE score do you think Tammy might have by the time she is out of the child protection system? What implications might this have on her health and well-being?

Share your responses in the large group.

The Long-Term Effects of Childhood Trauma, Cont'd.

Finding Your Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Score

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often** swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you **or** act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often** push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?
Or **ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
3. Did an adult person at least 5 years older than you **ever** touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?
Or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
4. Did you **often or very often** feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special **or** your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
5. Did you **often or very often** feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you **or** your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
7. Was your mother or stepmother **often or very often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
Or **sometimes, often, or very often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?
Or **ever** repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
10. Did a household member go to prison?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____ This is your ACE Score.

The Separation Experience: Activity 3D

Children in the child protection system may experience trauma from being removed from the home. Each new placement increases the likelihood of irreversible damage to their emotional and psychological health. However, because children's safety has to be the primary consideration, sometimes they must be moved for protection.

When children are removed from their homes, they feel isolated and detached. Not only do they worry about not seeing their parents, but they also fear losing their peer groups and siblings, changing schools or missing something as simple as their bed or toys.

Listen as the facilitator reads the scenario that follows. Afterward, take a moment to reflect on what you heard. In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- What feelings did you experience as you imagined being removed from your home and your parents?
- What might you do as a CASA/GAL volunteer to mitigate the negative effects of removal for Tammy, the older child in the Black-Smith case?

Listen to the example that the facilitator shares on the positive impact that a CASA/GAL volunteer had.

The Separation Experience, Cont'd.



Sit comfortably and close your eyes as you visualize yourself as a 4-year-old boy or girl at home one evening with your mom and dad. A lady came to the daycare center today and asked you lots of questions about what your mom and dad do when you are bad, whether you have enough food at home, how much your daddy drinks, and how often he hits your mommy. You are pretty sure you are going to be in a lot of trouble because the lady said she had to tell your parents that she talked to you. You can barely eat your dinner and your mom is already mad about that. Your dad is drinking another beer, which usually is a bad sign.

There is a knock on the door and that same lady is standing there with a policeman. Now you know you are really in big trouble. She tells your mom and dad that she is taking you away with her. Will they put you in jail? She sits near you at the table and tells you not to worry. She asks your mom or dad to get some clothes together. She asks if there is any special toy or blanket that might help you sleep better. You just can't imagine what it will be like to sleep in jail with all of those mean people that were there with your dad the last time he went.

But the lady doesn't take you to jail. The policeman and the lady take you to a big house in another part of the town. They are chatting and laughing on the way. You can tell they are trying to be nice, but you are really scared. The lady walks you to the door and another lady opens it up. She has a big smile on her face and takes your bag of stuff and says, "Come right in." Behind her is a man. He is smiling too. There are a bunch of other kids who are all looking at you. The new lady says, "Welcome. This is your new home. We are so glad to have you." She keeps smiling and seems really nice, but there must be some mistake. You didn't ask for a new home . . . You already have a mom and dad . . . You don't have brothers and sisters . . . This isn't your room . . . And what is this food that they are giving you? You realize that this is all your fault and that your mom and dad must be really mad now. You wonder if you'll ever see them again.

Trauma and Resilience

Resilience: Activity 3E

Part 1: Think of a time of adversity in your life. What helped you get through the difficult time? Do you remember a particular person who was especially helpful?

Listen to the example of each of the “seven Cs” that the facilitator shares.

Part 2: Listen as a volunteer reads the paragraph below about resilience. In pairs, choose one of the “seven Cs” of resilience and answer the following question:

- How can you help to build or reinforce this characteristic in a child you work with as a CASA/GAL volunteer?

Resilience



Considerable research has shown that child abuse and neglect increase the likelihood of developing problems later, but not all children subjected to lives of severe adversity go on to become dysfunctional adults. Some don't experience problems or do so to only a minor degree. This is resilience: the ability to become strong, healthy or successful again after something bad happens. Resilient people overcome the ravages of poverty, abuse, unhappy homes, parental loss, disability or any of the other risk factors known to set people on a difficult course in life. Resilient children achieve normal development despite their experience of past or present adversity. Studies of resilient people have repeatedly identified the presence of certain protective factors: personal qualities, family, relationships, outlooks and skills that assist them in overcoming hardships and finding success. Helping children and youth, in the child welfare system, discover and/or develop some of these characteristics can significantly improve their chances for positive life outcomes.

The Seven Cs of Resilience

When we encounter stress in our lives, we tend to develop ways to overcome that stress or prevent it in the future. Over time, overcoming stress can be refined, practiced and improved, making us more resilient to adverse situations. Healthy ways of dealing with stress include fostering one of the “seven Cs”:

- Competence: Ability to handle a situation effectively
- Confidence: Believing in personal abilities
- Connection: Having strong ties to family and community, creating a sense of belonging
- Character: Having a solid set of morals and values to help determine right from wrong
- Contribution: Feeling like a valuable member of society able to make a difference
- Coping: Ability to handle stress appropriately
- Control: Knowledge and ability to effect an outcome

Adapted from “The 7 Cs: The Essential Building Blocks of Resilience,”
from Fostering Resilience, <http://www.fosteringresilience.com/7cs.php>.

Skill Building: Communication and Interviewing

The Basic Elements of Communication: Activity 3F

The Basic Elements of Communication

Part 1: Think of a time when you and a friend, colleague or family member had a miscommunication. Write down one thing that contributed to the problem:

Part 2: Recall the information on basic elements of communication that you read in Pre-Work. In the large group, share any questions you have about what you read.

Open-Ended vs. Closed-Ended Questions: Activity 3G

Recall the information on open-ended and closed-ended questions that you read about in Pre-Work. Discuss any questions that you may have.

The CASA/GAL Volunteer Interview: Activity 3H

Part 1: Recall information that you read on the CASA/GAL volunteer interview and share a question.

Part 2: For Pre-Work, you watched Part 1 of the National CASA/GAL video showing a CASA/GAL volunteer interviewing a 4-year-old child. Now watch Part 2 of the video, which contains comments on the bottom of the screen regarding the strategies and techniques used by the volunteer in the video. As you watch, think about the interview you designed and conducted for Pre-Work.

Part 3: In the large group, discuss the following questions as they relate to the interview you conducted for Pre-Work:

- Which of the strategies from the video did you employ in your interview?
- How many of your questions were open-ended? How many were closed-ended?
- Were some questions more successful than others?
- How much information were you able to gather?
- What did you find easy about the interview? What did you find difficult?
- What will you do differently next time?

Part 4: In pairs, share the interview that you prepared as part of the Pre-Work. Provide feedback and suggestions to your partner.

Working a Case

The Black-Smith Case: Activity 3I

In a number of your training sessions, you will be applying the knowledge you've learned to a series of true-to-life case study simulations. To get started, the facilitator will divide you into small groups. Within each group, you will need to assign roles to various members (if there are fewer than four people in a group, some people may need to take on more than one role; if there are more than four people, not everyone will have an assigned role). The group roles include:

- **Runner:** The member of the group assigned to retrieve document packets from the facilitator
- **Scribe:** The individual who writes up recommendations to the court
- **Controller:** The person charged with keeping the group on track and monitoring the time remaining for the activity
- **Questioner:** The group member charged with asking certain questions and making sure each document that's read gets discussed by the group before moving to the next one

Part 1: Your group will receive a hard copy of the initial file for the Black-Smith case, which you read for Pre-Work. Take several minutes to re-familiarize yourself with the information in this case file. You will also receive a list of questions that your Questioner should remind your group to consider as you review documents and make your recommendations. After you review the initial case file, send your Runner to the facilitator to request an additional document (either an interview transcript from a key player you'd like to speak with or another important document you'd find during a case). You may continue to request additional interviews and documents one at a time over the course of 35 minutes in order to complete your information gathering for the case at this stage. After 35 minutes, your Scribe should legibly write on the flipchart your group's recommendations to the court regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions.

Part 2: Take a few minutes to view other groups' recommendations, and then briefly discuss the debrief questions that the facilitator distributes. In the large group, discuss these questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Writing Effective Recommendations: Activity 3J

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator gives an overview of the information below about writing effective recommendations to the court.

Part 2: Working in your small groups from the previous activity, evaluate the effectiveness of the recommendations your group wrote for the Black-Smith case.

- What recommendations would you add?
- How would you rewrite your recommendations to include outcome measures?

In the large group, discuss what changes you would make to your group's recommendations.

Writing Effective Recommendations in a CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report



Your recommendations to the court in the child's best interest are the result of your work on a case up to that point and the culmination of your volunteer court report. When you make a written recommendation, you are asking the court to make an order. The judge will decide whether or not to order the recommendations listed in your court report. As with everything in the court report, your recommendations should be written clearly and concisely.

Consider the following areas of concern when you write your recommendations:

- Custody of child and child's physical placement (always the first recommendation in your listing)
- Counseling (individual or family)
- Parental visitation (supervised or unsupervised)
- Sibling visitations (if siblings are in a different placement)
- Random drug screening for parents at the request of the caseworker or CASA/GAL volunteer
- Substance abuse assessments for parents
- Diagnostic assessment (including following all recommendations thereof)
- Parenting classes, domestic violence classes or anger management classes
- Testing to determine if a child has a learning disability and needs an IEP (individualized education plan)
- Community youth programs such as Big Brother, Big Sister

Recommendations Should Cover All the Child's Needs

Perhaps it seems obvious to say that the recommendations should cover the child's needs, but consider the following questions:

- What if the child has a need that has not been met over multiple hearings? Do you still ask for it?
- What if the child has a need that the county doesn't provide services for? Do you still ask for it?

Writing Effective Recommendations in a CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report, Cont'd.

- If the child's needs are great in one area, for instance mental health, should the child's educational needs still be listed, even though the mental health needs must be addressed before the educational needs can be attended to?
- If the child is placed with extended family members who can't meet some of his or her needs, do you still press for all needs to be met even though it may cause the child to be moved?
- For these or other challenges in getting a child's needs covered, consult with CASA/GAL staff to strategize the best solution.

Recommendations Should Not Set Parents Up for Failure

One of the central dilemmas for CASA/GAL volunteers is the fact that children do best when they live with their parents or other family members who can provide a minimum sufficient level of care, and yet the parenting abilities of these adults may seem marginal to them. Parents and caregivers in our cases are usually struggling or limited in significant ways. CASA/GAL volunteers must advocate for the child's safety and at the same time, keep in mind that the only standard a family should have to meet is the minimum sufficient level of care.

Poverty in and of itself should not be a factor when deciding if a family will be allowed to raise its own children. It is easy to set parents or guardians up for failure if we make recommendations they cannot afford to meet. Additionally, a long laundry list of court orders can be so discouraging, that a parent who could in fact succeed, may give up. If that occurs, have we served the child's best interests?

Consider these questions:

- What other ways might we set a parent up for failure?
- How have we fallen short in our advocacy for the child's best interest if we do set the parents up for failure? (Who else is failing here?)

Writing Effective Recommendations in a CASA/GAL Volunteer Court Report, Cont'd.

All Recommendations Should Be Supported in the Body of Report

Imagine you are the judge reading a CASA/GAL volunteer court report and you come across recommendations concerning issues that were not mentioned in the body of the report. What would you think?

- Why is it important to support each recommendation in the report body?
- How does writing a recommendation to address an issue not discussed in the report put that recommendation at risk?
- If the case is appealed and all reports in the file are read again, what are the implications for court reports that don't support their own recommendations?

Effective Recommendations Include Outcome Measures

Outcome measures add specific parameters that define a successful execution of the recommendation. They clarify the expected outcome and set observable goals.

As you look at the chart that follows, consider these questions:

- How will you know if the court-ordered recommendations in the “no outcome measures” column have been met?
- In which case are you more assured that the children's needs will be met?

Recommendations without Outcome Measures	Recommendations with Outcome Measures
Mother must have substance abuse evaluation and follow recommendations from same.	Mother must have substance abuse evaluation and follow recommendations from same, and remain drug-free for 6 months before court considers reunification.
Parents must attend parenting classes.	Parents must attend parenting classes and demonstrate the following parenting skills: establishing meal schedule, bringing children to school on time, bringing children to clinic for medical treatment as advised by physician.
Child should have visitation with siblings.	Child should have visitation with siblings set up monthly and supervised by caseworker.

Chapter Wrap-Up

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter.

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 3 Volunteer Training Evaluation and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Chapter 4 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 4 training session, complete the following assignments:

Mental Illness in Families

Read the article on “Mental Illness in Families” in the Chapter 4 Pre-Work packet.

Mental Health Article

Read the article “Drugged as Children, Foster-Care Alumni Speak Out” found in Chapter 4 Pre-Work packet. The article will be discussed during an activity in Chapter 4.

A Multimodal Approach to Managing Mental Health Disorders in Children

Read the article on medicating children in foster care and a multimodal approach to managing mental health disorders in children.

- Be prepared to discuss the points brought up by the author.
- Be prepared to discuss the questions that advocates should ask.

Why Are Poor Children More Likely to Be in the System?

Read the article on “Why Are Poor Children More Likely to Be in the System?” in the Chapter 4 Pre-Work packet.

Chapter 4 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

Questions on Poverty in Your Community

Use either the Internet or more traditional, in-person methods to answer the following questions about poverty and public assistance in your state:

- What is the minimum wage in your state?
- What are the current poverty guidelines for a family of four in your state?
- What percent of people of color in your state fall within the poverty guidelines? What percent of the white population in your state fall within the poverty guidelines?

Examining Poverty vs. Neglect Scenarios Activity

Read through and complete the activity on examining poverty vs. neglect scenarios.

Obtaining Confidential Case-Related Records

Read the article on how to obtain confidential case-related records in the Chapter 4 Pre-Work packet.

Confidentiality and the CASA/GAL Volunteer

Read the article “Confidentiality and the CASA/GAL Volunteer” in the Chapter 4 Pre-Work packet.

Necessity of Timely, Effective Communication

Read the article “Necessity of Timely, Effective Communication” in the Chapter 4 Pre-Work packet.

Fine Art of Team Work (Child Protection Is Not an Individual Sport)

Read the article “Fine Art of Team Work (Child Protection Is Not an Individual Sport)” in Chapter 4 Pre-Work packet.

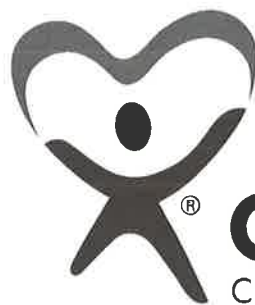
The Greene Case

Read the initial case notes for the Greene case, which the facilitator will distribute. You will be applying what you know about the Greene case during various activities in the Chapter 4 training session.

Chapter 4 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

Optional: Visiting an Agency by Taking Public Transportation

If you are to complete this Pre-Work assignment, the facilitator will hand out instructions for visiting an agency by taking public transportation. Listen as the facilitator gives an overview of the assignment, and ask any questions. You will have until _____ to complete the assignment.



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CHAPTER FOUR

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Prevention, Department of Justice.

CHAPTER 4:


Mental Health, Poverty and Professional Communication


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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 4:
Pre-Work Recap





- ✓Read the article on mental illness in families.
- ✓Read the articles about medicating children in foster care and a multimodal approach to managing mental health disorders in children and be prepared to discuss the points brought up by the author. Also, be prepared to discuss the questions that advocates should ask.
- ✓Read the article on Why Are Poor Children More Likely to Be in the System?

3

Prior to this training session, you should have completed the following Pre-Work assignments:

- Read the article on mental illness in families.
- Read the articles about medicating children in foster care and a multimodal approach to managing mental health disorders in children.
 - Be prepared to discuss the points brought up by the author.
 - Be prepared to discuss the questions that advocates should ask.
- Read the article titled Why Are Poor Children More Likely to Be in the System?
- Research answers to these questions:
 - What is the minimum wage in your state?
 - What are the current poverty guidelines for a family of four in your state?
 - What percent of people of color in your state fall within the poverty guidelines? What percent of the white population in your state fall within the poverty guidelines?
- Complete the activity on examining poverty vs. neglect scenarios.
- Read the article on how to obtain confidential case-related records.

Pre-Work Recap, Cont'd.

- Read the article on Confidentiality and the CASA/GAL Volunteer.
- Read the article on the Necessity of Timely, Effective Communication.
- Read the article on the Fine Art of Team Work (child protection is not an individual sport).
- Read the Initial Case Notes for the Greene Case.
- Visit an agency by taking public transportation (the facilitator will decide whether to assign this optional exercise).

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter introduces two common societal issues that may impact the children and families you are working with: mental illness and poverty. This chapter also offers additional information about communication skills, including requesting confidential information and working with professionals on a case.

Competency Building in Chapter 4	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills, Attributes, Behavior Development in Chapter 4
CASA/GAL Role	Understands how to obtain relevant confidential information
Foundation of Knowledge	Understands how mental illness affects families Understands strategies to advocate for children and adolescents with mental health disorders Understands how poverty can impact families and children
Sound Judgment	Understands the confidentiality requirements of being a CASA/GAL volunteer
Communication	Knows how to effectively articulate a point of view while advocating for the needs of a child Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely

Mental Health

Understanding Mental Illness: Activity 4A

Part 1: The facilitator will distribute a handout with mental health statistics. Read the information and circle any information that surprises you. Then, share with a partner the statistics you noted. The facilitator will ask for a few volunteers to share.

Part 2: Recall information you read about the impact of mental illness on families and children as Pre-Work and listen to the facilitator's review of this information. In the large group, answer the following questions based on what you know so far about the Greene case:

- How might parental mental illness affect Marky?
- What might you do as a CASA/GAL volunteer to gather additional information about the impact of parental mental illness on Marky?

Mental Health Treatment for Children in Care: Activity 4B

Considering the information you read for Pre-Work on mental health for children in care and a multimodal approach to managing mental health disorders in children, discuss the following question in small groups:

- How might CASA/GAL volunteers advocate for children and adolescents with mental health disorders?

In the large group, share your answers and any questions that arose in your group's discussion.

Poverty Pre-Work Debrief: Activity 4C

Part 1: For Pre-Work, you were asked to research these questions:

- What is the minimum wage in your state?
- What are the current poverty guidelines for a family of four in your state?
- What percent of people of color in your state fall within the poverty guidelines? What percent of the white population in your state fall within the poverty guidelines?

Share what you found during your research. Then discuss the following questions in the large group:

- Why do you think this information is relevant for your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer?
- What are common assumptions about why certain populations experience poverty at a higher rate?
- Would you have to make changes in your life to live below the poverty threshold in your state? If so, what might they be?
- What skills or strengths does it take to live in poverty?

Part 2: If the facilitator assigned the optional Pre-Work to visit an agency by taking public transportation, use the questions below to discuss your experiences in the large group:

- Describe the preparations you had to make to do this assignment.
- How many buses (or other forms of public transportation) did you have to take to get to your destination? What was the cost?
- How long did it take you to get to your destination? If you were driving a personal vehicle, how much time would it take to get to your destination?
- What/who did you expect to see while riding public transportation? What/who did you actually see?
- What was your initial reaction or feeling when you learned that part of your assignment was to ride public transportation?
- How did you feel after riding public transportation, as compared to how you felt before riding it?

Poverty Pre-Work Debrief, Cont'd.

- How does riding public transportation put you in touch with the experiences of poor families who have no other means of getting around?
- What agencies did you visit? What services do they provide?
- How did it feel to be in an office that provides public assistance? Were you embarrassed and if so, why?
- How does this experience help you understand the stigma associated with being poor?

Higher Rate of Poor Children in the System: Activity 4D

Why Are Poor Children More Likely to Be in the System?

In pairs, discuss the following questions. There are many possible answers for each question.

- What effect might living in poverty have on access to education, healthcare and daycare?
- What effect might current poverty have on the likelihood of future poverty?
- Is poverty viewed differently in different communities, geographic regions, neighborhoods and/or religions? Why or why not?
- Are the experiences of poor families of color different from those of poor white families? What about Native American families? Why are race and income level interconnected issues?

The facilitator will ask for a few volunteers to share in the large group.

Poverty vs Neglect: Activity 4E

Recall the scenarios that you examined on child safety in the Pre-Work. In the large group, describe some of the factors you considered as you finished each sentence in each scenario. During the discussion, think about these situations from different perspectives by answering questions such as:

- What is the family's economic level?
- Are cultural issues present that might cause the family not to ask for help?
- Are there language or literacy barriers that prevent the family from accessing resources?
- Is the situation temporary or permanent?
- What is the age of the child?
- Are other risk factors, such as substance abuse or mental health disorders, present?

Skill Building: Professional Communication

Obtaining Confidential Records: Activity 4F

Part 1: Recall the information that you read about obtaining confidential records for children and parents involved in a child protection case as Pre-Work. Listen as the facilitator presents information about local policies and practices. The facilitator will also distribute copies of local release forms that you will use in your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer.

Part 2: In small groups, discuss the following questions:

- List several types of confidential records concerning children and how having access to these records would benefit you as a CASA/GAL volunteer. What is one important confidential record concerning Marky Greene that you want to review?
- List several types of confidential parental records and how having access to that information would benefit you in your volunteer role. What is one parental record that you want to review in the Greene case?

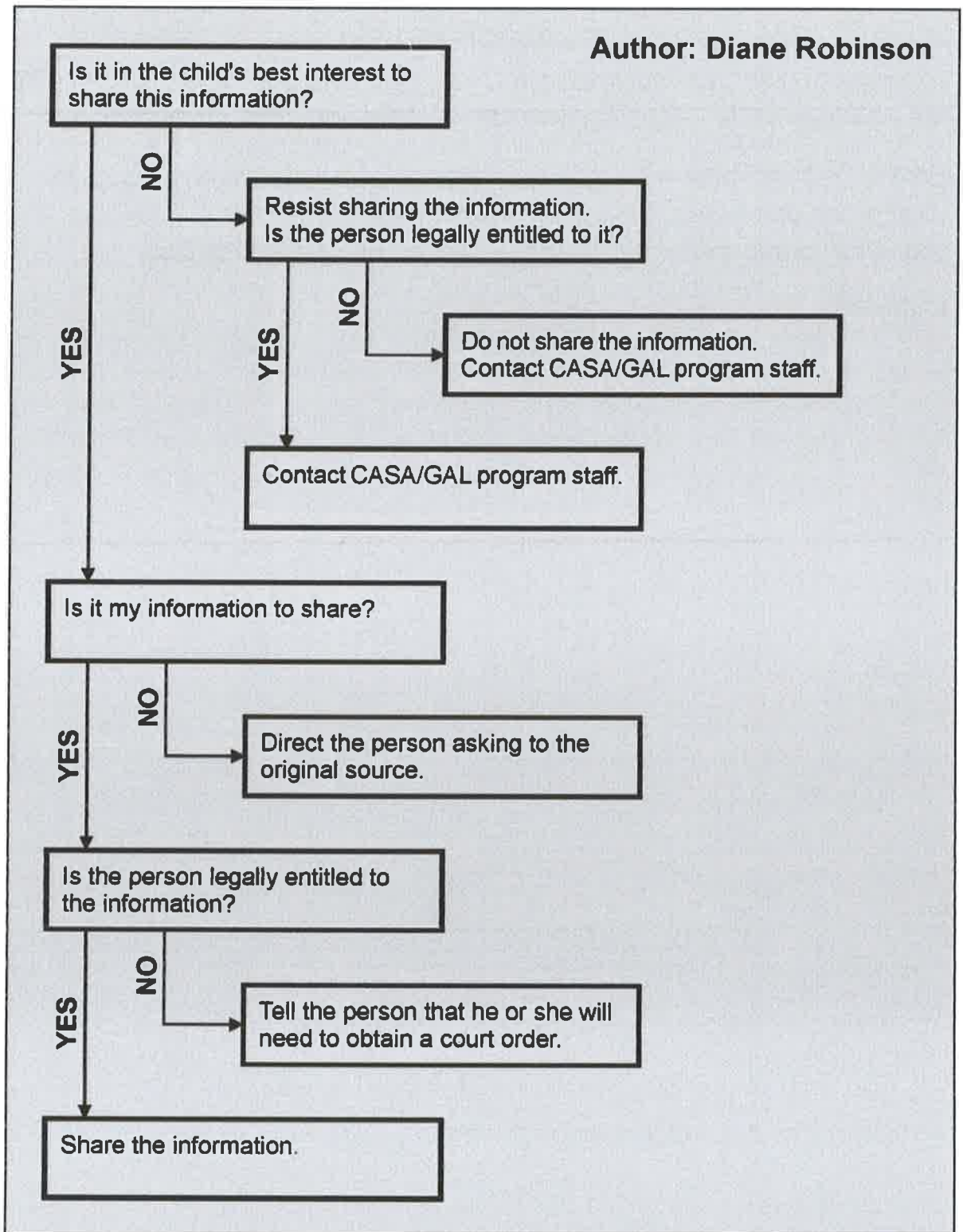
Report back to the large group.

Confidentiality and the CASA/GAL Volunteer: Activity 4G

Recall the information that you read about what confidentiality means for the CASA/GAL volunteer as Pre-Work. It is important that you are very clear about what information is, and what is not, confidential—and with whom you can share what pieces of information. Discuss any questions you have. The facilitator will address all questions in the large group.

Should I share information with someone else about this child or this case?

Author: Diane Robinson



Effective Communication with Professionals on a Case: Activity 4H



Part 1: Recall the information that you read about the necessity of timely, effective communication as Pre-Work. In the large group, brainstorm ten attributes of good communication in CASA/GAL volunteer work. Keep in mind the volunteer's role in working with caseworkers and other professionals.

Part 2: The facilitator will divide the class into small groups and assign to each group one example of successful communication from the handout. In your small group, discuss what made this communication effective.

In the large group, discuss your findings.

Working a Case

The Greene Case: Activity 4I

Part 1: Your group will receive a hard copy of the initial file for the Greene case, which you read for Pre-Work. Take several minutes to re-familiarize yourself with the information in the case file. You will also receive a list of questions that your Questioner should remind your group to consider as you review documents and make your recommendations. After you review the initial case file, send your Runner to the facilitator to request an additional document (either an interview transcript from a key player you'd like to speak with or another important document you'd find during a case). You may continue to request additional interviews and documents one at a time over the course of 35 minutes to complete your information gathering for the case at this stage. After 35 minutes, your Scribe should legibly write on the flipchart your group's recommendations regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions.

Part 2: Take a few minutes to view other groups' recommendations, and then briefly discuss the debrief questions that the facilitator distributes. In the large group, discuss these questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Taking Case Notes: Activity 4J

Taking clear and detailed notes is essential to your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer, as these notes will form the basis for your volunteer court report. Each time you meet with or speak to someone regarding a case or review records pertinent to a case, you will need to document what you learned. Your notes should include what was said and what you observed.

Working in the same small groups you were in for the Greene case study activity, have one member of your group read aloud the interview with Monica Morales, the intensive in-home family therapist. Then, working individually, summarize the interview into a paragraph for your case notes.

The facilitator will ask for volunteers to share their summaries in the large group.

Chapter Wrap-up

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter.

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 4 Volunteer Training Evaluation and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Chapter 5 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 5 training session, complete the following assignments:

Substance Abuse

Read the National Institute on Drug Abuse information about commonly abused drugs by clicking on the link provided in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work packet. You do not need to become an expert on this topic; simply familiarize yourself with the variety of abused drugs and their effects. Also read the statistics about substance abuse found in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work packet.

National CASA Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

Read the National CASA Vision Statement and Guiding Principles found in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work packet.

Cultural Competence

Read the Cultural Competence Glossary in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work packet. This glossary will help familiarize you with some of the terms you'll encounter in Chapters 5 and 6.

Disproportionality and Statistics

Read information about disproportionality and disproportionality statistics found in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work packet.

Chapter 5 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

The Lavender Case

Read the Initial Case Notes for the Lavender Case in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work packet. You will be applying what you know about this case during various activities in Chapter 5.

Good and Bad Court Reports

Read examples of good and bad court reports found in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work packet and answer the following questions:

- Which statements are opinion-based?
- Which statements are fact-based?
- What's missing from each example?
- What could be improved in each example?





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CHAPTER FIVE

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CHAPTER 5:

Substance Abuse and Cultural Competence

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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 5: Pre-Work Recap



- ✓ Read the information on substance abuse
- ✓ Read the information about “Commonly Used Drugs by National Institute on Drug Abuse”
- ✓ Read about diversity, National CASA Vision and Guiding Principles
- ✓ Read the “Cultural Competence Glossary”
- ✓ Read the information on Disproportionality and Disproportionality Statistics
- ✓ Read the “Local Disproportionality Statistics”

3

Prior to this training session, you should have read the following Pre-Work assignments:

- Information on substance abuse
- Information about commonly used drugs by National Institute on Drug Abuse
- Information about diversity, National CASA Vision and Guiding Principles
- Cultural competency glossary terms
- Disproportionality statistics
- Local disproportionality statistics
- Initial case notes for the Lavender case
- Sample court reports
- Examples of good and bad court reports

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter explores the importance of cultural competence in the CASA/GAL volunteer role. You'll also learn about how substance abuse can affect parenting and you'll continue to apply your new knowledge and skills in a case simulation.

Competency Building in Chapter 5	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills, & Attributes Development in Chapter 5
CASA/GAL Role	
Foundation of Knowledge	Understands the ways substance abuse can affect children and families Knows the importance of being aware of resources in the community that assist with substance abuse
Cultural Competency	Knows strategies and steps to take to increase cultural competency skills and demonstrates culturally competent child advocacy Understands the root causes of disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system and the disparate outcomes children of color experience
Communication	Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely

Substance Abuse

Understanding Substance Abuse: Activity 5A

Part 1: Think of friends, family members or colleagues who are currently abusing one or more substances, or who have done so in the past. As you think of these people, make two lists:

- What are their strengths?
- How does/did their substance abuse impact their lives?

Strengths...	How substance abuse impacts this person's life...

Part 2: Recall the information about substance abuse that appears in the Pre-Work Handouts and discuss any questions that you may have. Then listen as the facilitator provides information about commonly abused substances in your local community.

Substance Abuse and Parenting: Activity 5B

In the large group, brainstorm possible effects of substance abuse on parenting. The facilitator will list all responses on a flipchart page. Then compare your answers to the list below.

The Effects of Substance Abuse on Parenting



It is important to remember that when a parent is involved with drugs or alcohol to a degree that interferes with the ability to parent effectively, a child may suffer in many ways:

- A parent may be emotionally and physically unavailable to the child.
- A parent's mental functioning, judgment, inhibitions and/or protective capacity may be seriously impaired by alcohol or drug use, placing the child at increased risk of all forms of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse.
- A substance-abusing parent may "disappear" for hours or days, leaving the child alone or with someone unable to meet the child's basic needs.
- A parent may also spend the family's income on alcohol and/or other drugs, depriving the child of adequate food, clothing, housing and healthcare.
- The resulting lack of resources often leads to unstable housing, which results in frequent school changes, loss of friends and belongings and an inability to maintain important support systems (religious communities, sports teams, neighbors).
- A child's health and safety may be seriously jeopardized by criminal activity associated with the use, manufacture and distribution of illicit drugs in the home.
- Eventually, a parent's substance abuse may lead to criminal behavior and periods of incarceration, depriving the child of parental care.

The Effects of Substance Abuse on Parenting, Cont'd.

- Exposure to parental abuse of alcohol and other drugs, along with a lack of stability and appropriate role models, may contribute to the child's future substance abuse.
- Prenatal exposure to alcohol or other drugs may impact a child's development.

What the Child Experiences: Activity 5C

One Family's Story

As you watch the clip of the news story “Kids—Children of Addicts,” think about advocating for a similar family. After watching the clip, share the challenges of advocating for a family with parental substance abuse.

Be prepared to share your responses with the large group.

Working with Families: Activity 5D

Finding a Balance

Part 1: Read Shannon's story below. Listen as the facilitator presents key points to consider when deciding whether to recommend that a child return home.

Part 2: The facilitator will divide you into two groups: One group will make an argument for terminating Caterina's parental rights so Shannon can be adopted; the other will make an argument for giving Caterina more time to show she can parent Shannon. You will have 5 minutes to work as a group to prepare your argument and then 2 minutes to make your argument in the large group. After both sides have shared their reasons for terminating or not terminating parental rights, the facilitator will present information about what you, as a CASA/GAL volunteer, can do to provide the best possible advocacy for a child.

Shannon's Story



Shannon is the fourth child born to Caterina. Shannon's oldest half-siblings, two sisters, who are each more than ten years older than Shannon, are in the custody of their father in another state. Caterina has not seen them in several years. The remaining half-sibling, a boy, lives locally with his father and spends weekends with Caterina.

Shannon was removed from Caterina's custody when she was approximately one year old because Caterina was arrested for driving while intoxicated with Shannon in the car. Shannon was placed in foster care with Nathan and Marie, a couple with no other children.

Shannon remained in foster care with Nathan and Marie for sixteen months while Caterina engaged in treatment for her addiction to alcohol. During this time Caterina, who initially fought treatment and was unable to complete her first stint in residential treatment, successfully completed treatment at a second facility and at a halfway house. Upon leaving the halfway house, she secured a centrally located three-bedroom apartment and reported consistent attendance at 12-step meetings. She engaged in therapy, secured a mentor through a women's mentoring program run by the United Way and attended training in medical records management, though she struggled to find a job.

Communication with Nathan and Marie was frequent and supportive. Nathan and Marie rallied their church to help furnish Caterina's apartment and, with the permission of Shannon's caseworker, often picked Caterina up on Sundays so that she could attend church with them and Shannon. Visits with Shannon, at first brief and supervised, increased to unsupervised overnight and weekend visits. When she was twenty-eight months old, Shannon was returned to Caterina's custody.

In the months that followed, Caterina enrolled Shannon in preschool, continued her job-related training and continued to report regular attendance at 12-step meetings. Caterina maintained a relationship with Nathan and Marie. Shannon often spent Sundays with them and even joined them on an out-of-state vacation to visit Marie's family.

After a little more than a year, Caterina relapsed in an episode for which Shannon was present, and Caterina was transported to the emergency room. Caterina called Nathan and Marie from the hospital. They picked up Shannon.

Shannon's Story, Cont'd.

Her placement with (return to) Nathan and Marie's home was formalized the next day.

In the fifteen months that followed, Caterina successfully completed day treatment for her addiction. She secured and retained employment. She continues to live in the same apartment. Visits with Shannon started almost immediately after her return to Nathan and Marie's home and have continued, though they continue to be supervised and more limited than during Shannon's previous time in foster care. Communication between Caterina and Nathan and Marie is more limited and guarded.

Caterina is now four and a half years old. Nathan and Marie have recently hired an attorney to represent their interests in court. They are willing to adopt. The goal for Shannon remains return to parent, but all involved are unsure as to how to proceed and what is in Shannon's best interest. Should she return to Caterina or should Caterina's parental rights be terminated so that Nathan and Marie can adopt? What do you think?

Can the Child Return Home? Key Points to Consider

In deciding whether a child can return home to a family where substance abuse occurs, many factors should be weighed. These include:

- The parent's ability to function in a caregiving role
- The child's health, development and age
- Parental history of alcohol or other drug abuse and substance abuse treatment
- Safety of the home
- Family supports
- Available treatment resources
- Treatment prognosis and/or length of sobriety

A dilemma that often arises is the conflict between the legal mandate (and the child's need) for permanence (ASFA) and the long-term treatment (including inpatient treatment) that substance-abusing parents may need. If a parent is in treatment, consideration should be given to placing the child with the parent

Shannon's Story, Cont'd.

rather than in foster care. Although foster care is often the only available option, the child may feel punished when placed away from the parent. The focus should be to support successful treatment, while simultaneously working at keeping the child with the parent.

What a CASA/GAL Volunteer Can Do

Educate yourself about the power of addiction and about resources such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Rational Recovery, Al-Anon, Alateen and Nar-Anon. Support those family members who are willing to deal with the substance abuse problem, even if the person with the substance dependence is not.

Services for which you might advocate include:

- Thorough assessment with recommendations for treatment
- Substance abuse treatment services (especially programs where the child can be with the parent, if appropriate)
- Home-based services to build family skills
- Relocation out of an environment where drug or alcohol use is pervasive
- Financial assistance and childcare while parents are in treatment
- Support services such as SSI (Supplemental Security Income), TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), food stamps, job training and child support
- When a child is in foster care, frequent visitation in a homelike atmosphere or an informal setting such as a park
- Assistance for a substance-abusing parent seeking to flee a domestic violence perpetrator, such as obtaining a protective order, finding alternative housing and performing other necessary steps (domestic violence victims are more likely to remain sober away from the abuser)

Skill Building: Cultural Competence

Understanding the Culture: Activity 5E

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator defines culture and describes its components. In pairs, choose one component found below the waterline of the culture iceberg, and explain an unseen rule of your culture. Although you and your partner may be of the same race or ethnicity, chances are you'll find slight variations in your culture's rules, expectations or customs.

Part 2: The facilitator will distribute a four-piece puzzle to each pair. Working with your partner, construct a square using all four pieces without overlapping any sections. When everyone has finished, the facilitator will distribute an additional piece, labeled "culture." Make a new square using all five pieces. Again, no pieces may overlap.

- In the large group, answer the following questions:
- Describe your experience having to make a new puzzle after receiving the new piece.
- How is this activity similar to advocating for a child from another culture?

What Is Culture?



Culture is a learned pattern of customs, beliefs and behaviors, socially acquired and socially transmitted through symbols and widely shared meanings. Culture can be defined as an organized group of learned responses and ready-made solutions to problems people face and how to live day-to-day.

Culture is not only bound by race and ethnicity. Groups of people who work in certain fields may develop a unique culture. They have a unique language, practice model, etc. Culture defines how we do things, think about things and talk about things.

There are many analogies that help us understand culture. One is that culture is like an iceberg: There are parts we can see and parts we can't see but know are there. The part above the waterline makes up only about 10 percent of an iceberg's entirety. The visible parts of culture might include dress, music, food and games. Those that we can't see but know are there include unwritten rules guiding patterns of speech, concepts of time and the meanings of body language.

The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, the majority of culture is below the surface.

Surface Culture

Above sea level

Emotional load: relatively low

food • dress • music
visual arts • drama • crafts
dance • literature • language
celebrations • games

Deep Culture

Unspoken Rules

Partially below sea level

Emotional load: very high

Unconscious Rules

Completely below sea level

Emotional load: intense

courtesy • contextual conversational patterns • concept of time
personal space • rules of conduct • facial expressions
nonverbal communication • body language • touching • eye contact
patterns of handling emotions • notions of modesty • concept of beauty
courtship practices • relationships to animals • notions of leadership
tempo of work • concepts of food • ideals of childrearing
theory of disease • social interaction rate • nature of friendships
tone of voice • attitudes toward elders • concept of cleanliness
notions of adolescence • patterns of group decision making
definition of insanity • preference for competition or cooperation
tolerance of physical pain • concept of "self" • concept of past and future
definition of obscenity • attitudes toward dependents • problem solving
roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and so forth

Adapted from Indiana Department of Education • Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education

The Value of Diversity: Activity 5F



Recall the information you read about diversity, the National CASA Vision Statement and guiding principles found in Chapter 5 Pre-Work Handouts and discuss any questions that you may have. Then read the signs posted around the room, which list the principles that guide National CASA's efforts and goals related to achieving diversity within the CASA/GAL network.

In the large group, briefly share which principle you think is most important and why. Ask any questions you have about the vision statement or the principles.

Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes: Activity 5G

Recall the information that you read about national disproportionality and disproportionality statistics found in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work Handouts, as well as disproportionality statistics in your state and local area in the Chapter 5 Pre-Work Handouts. In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think disproportionality exists in the child welfare system? What factors might contribute to it?
- What are some other systems that impact the lives of the children and families you will work with as a CASA/GAL volunteer? What are some examples of disproportionality in those systems?
- What is one thing you can do to become aware of unconscious racial bias in your role as a CASA/GAL volunteer?

Working a Case

The Lavender Case: Activity 5H



Part 1: Your group will receive a hard copy of the initial file for the Lavender case, which you read for Pre-Work. Take several minutes to re-familiarize yourself with the information in this case file. You will also receive a list of questions that your Questioner should remind your group to consider as you review documents and make your recommendations. After you review the initial case file, send your Runner to the facilitator to request an additional document (either an interview transcript from a key player you'd like to speak with or another important document you'd find during a case). You may continue to request additional interviews and documents one at a time over the course of 35 minutes to complete your information gathering for the case at this stage. After 35 minutes, your Scribe should legibly write on the flipchart your group's recommendations to the court regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions.

Part 2: Take a few minutes to view other groups' recommendations, and then briefly discuss with your group the debrief questions that the facilitator distributes. In the large group, discuss these questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Writing Effective Court Reports: Activity 5I

Part 1: Recall the three sample court reports that you read in Chapter 5 Pre-Work Handouts. In pairs, discuss these reports. Then answer the following questions:

- Which statements are opinion-based?
- Which statements are fact-based?
- What's missing from each example?
- What could be improved in each example?

Part 2: In the large group, discuss how to improve these sample sections. Recall the good and bad court reports that you read in Chapter 5 Local/Program Pre-Work Handouts. The facilitator may discuss these as examples of effective court reports and court reports that need improving.

Chapter Wrap-up and Review

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter.

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 5 Training Evaluation and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Chapter 6 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 6 training session, complete the following assignments:

- **Domestic Violence**

Read the information about Understanding Domestic Violence and the statistics about domestic violence found in the Chapter 6 Pre-Work Handouts. Write down any questions you have, and the facilitator will address them during the next chapter.

- **Sorting People**

In the Chapter 6 Online Resources, click the link to an exercise called “Sorting People: Can You Tell Somebody’s Race by Looking at Them?” Follow the instructions to complete the activity, and then consider the following questions:

- How did you do?
- What surprised you about the exercise?
- Think about the cases you’ve worked on so far. Did you observe any stereotyping in the Black, Bleux, Greene or Bass cases? If so, how did it affect the families?

- **Exploring Culture and Perceptions Activity**

For the specified categories, ask participants to think about their culture and life experiences, and how they would describe themselves, their family of origin, or their current family situation to someone they know pretty well. Ask them to answer the questions listed in the Chapter 6 Pre-Work Handouts.

Chapter 6 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

Ask the participants to imagine how Susan Mailer, the mother in the Lavender case, would describe herself to someone who has power over her life—for instance, the caseworker, the judge, or an attorney. Ask them to take the perspective of Susan and answer the questions listed in the Chapter 6 Pre-Work Handouts.

- **Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence**

Ask the participants to read the article on Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence.

- **10 Benefits of Practicing Culturally Competent Child Advocacy**

Ask the participants to read the article on the 10 Benefits of Practicing Culturally Competent Child Advocacy.

- **Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers**

Ask the participants to refer to the Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers.

- **Culturally Competent Child Advocacy Activity**

Ask participants to think about their culture and life experiences, and how they would describe themselves, their family of origin, or their current family situation to someone they know pretty well. Have them answer the questions listed in Chapter 6 Pre-Work Handouts.

Have participants also imagine how Susan Mailer, the mother in the Lavender case, would describe herself to someone who has power over her life—for instance, the caseworker, the judge, or an attorney. Ask them to take the perspective of Susan and answer the questions listed in Chapter 6 Pre-Work Handouts.

- **Tips on How to Become More Culturally Competent**

Ask the participants to read the article Tips on How to Become More Culturally Competent.

Chapter 6 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

- **Individual Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence Activity**

Ask the participants to refer to the Individual Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence and create a plan to become more culturally competent.

- **The Amarillo Case**

Read the Initial Case Notes for the Amarillo Case. You will be applying what you know about this case during various activities in Chapter 6.



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CHAPTER SIX

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CHAPTER 6:


Domestic Violence and Cultural Competence


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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 6:
Pre-Work Recap





- ✓Read the article **Understanding Domestic Violence** and the statistics about domestic violence. Write down any questions you have.
- ✓Complete the pbs.org **“Sorting People”** exercise and consider the questions listed.
- ✓Complete the **Exploring Culture and Perceptions Activity** and answer the listed questions.
- ✓Read the article on **Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence**.

3

Prior to this training session, you should have completed the following Pre-Work assignments:

- Read the article “Understanding Domestic Violence” and the statistics about domestic violence found in the Chapter 6 Online Resources. Write down any questions you have.
- Complete the pbs.org “Sorting People” exercise, and consider the questions that appear in the Chapter 6 Pre-Work Handouts.
- Complete the Exploring Culture and Perceptions Activity, and answer the listed questions.
- Read the article “Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence.”
- Complete the Culturally Competent Child Advocacy Activity.
- Read the article “Tips on How to Become More Culturally Competent.”
- Complete the Individual Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence Activity by filling in the details in the Individual Action Plan.
- Read the Initial Case Notes for the Amarillo Case.

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter continues to explore the importance of cultural competence in CASA/GAL volunteer work. You'll learn about issues related to domestic violence, and you'll continue to apply your new knowledge and skills in a case simulation.

Competency Building in Chapter 6

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills, Attributes, Behavior Development in Chapter 6
Cultural Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands and demonstrates self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values when working with diverse groups• Knows strategies and steps to take to increase cultural competency skills and demonstrate culturally competent child advocacy• Understands how to recognize and challenge own biases
Foundation of Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands how domestic violence affects children and families• Knows the importance of being aware of resources in the community that assist with substance abuse
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely• Knows how to utilize basic communication and interviewing skills

Domestic Violence

Putting a Face on Domestic Violence: Activity 6A

Part 1: Watch the video “Why We Stayed.”

Part 2: Listen as the facilitator presents information about domestic violence and how it affects the work of CASA/GAL volunteers. Ask any questions you have about the homework reading or the material presented in class.

Part 3: In your group, share your responses to the following questions.

- What was going through your mind as you listened to the women’s stories?
- Did the information in Part 2 alter your thoughts? How so?
- How do you think hearing the story and reading the information about domestic violence might influence your volunteer advocacy?

Domestic Violence and CASA/GAL Volunteer Work



As a CASA/GAL volunteer, it is important for you to be aware of the possibility that domestic violence exists in the families you encounter. If you suspect domestic violence is occurring, make sure the victim has several opportunities to talk to you alone. The partner who has been battered is often terrified of revealing the truth for fear of further violence. Observe body language carefully. Look for typical characteristics:

- A conspiracy of silence prevails.
- The batterer often seems more truthful, confident and persuasive than the victim.
- The victim may seem angry and frustrated.
- There is often no police or medical record of the violence.
- There is a recurring cycle of family tension, followed by the batterer's explosion, followed by a period of calm (often filled with apologies and promises) that then begins to build back to tension

Domestic violence is about control and domination. When a battered partner leaves the family home (or the batterer is forced to leave), the batterer feels a loss of control formerly exerted. This makes the batterer even more likely to be violent. This increased level of danger makes many victims reluctant to leave, even when the consequence of staying may be the placement of children in foster care.

Impact on Children

Lenore Walker, author of *The Battered Woman*, describes the world of children who grow up in violent homes:

"Children who live in battering relationships experience the most insidious form of child abuse. Whether or not they are physically abused by either parent is less important than the psychological scars they bear from watching their fathers beat their mothers. They learn to become part of a dishonest conspiracy of silence. They learn to lie to prevent inappropriate behavior, and they learn to suspend fulfillment of their needs rather than risk another confrontation. They expend a lot of energy avoiding problems. They live in a world of make-believe."

Domestic Violence and CASA/GAL Volunteer Work, Cont'd.

Children in families where there is domestic violence are at great risk of becoming victims of abuse themselves. In some cases, children may try to intervene and protect their mothers, getting caught in the middle of the violence. In most cases, however, children are also targets of the violence. Batterers sometimes deliberately arrange for children to witness the violence. The effect on children's development can be just as severe for those who witness abuse as for those who are abused. Witnessing violence at home is even more harmful than witnessing a fight or shooting in a violent neighborhood. It has the most negative impact when the victim or perpetrator is the child's parent or caregiver.

*J. Chiancone, "Children: The Forgotten Victims of Domestic Violence,"
ABA Child Law Practice Journal, July 1997.*

What Can a CASA/GAL Volunteer Do?

Be both knowledgeable and concerned about domestic violence.

Children from violent homes are at a higher risk for abuse than other children. According to "A Nation's Shame," a report compiled by the US Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, "Domestic violence is the single, major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in the US."

Take into account the history and severity of family violence when making any recommendation for placement of a child. Many professionals in the field of domestic violence believe that you cannot protect the child unless you also protect the primary nurturer/victim (usually the mother). As part of that perspective, they advocate for placement of the child with the mother regardless of other factors, saying to do otherwise further victimizes the mother at the hands of the system.

Determine the best interest of the child. It may be that, with proper safeguards in place, the victim can make a safe home for the child while the threat from the batterer is reduced by absence, treatment and/or legal penalties. It is also possible that the victim has shortcomings that prevent her from caring for her family at even a minimally sufficient level. You should assess the situation with a clear understanding of domestic violence dynamics, but in the end, you must make a recommendation based solely on the best interest of the child.

Domestic Violence and CASA/GAL Volunteer Work, Cont'd.

Seek resources for children from violent homes. Children need:

- Positive role models and supportive environments that will help them develop social skills and address feelings about the violence in a constructive manner.
- Help adopting alternative, nonviolent ways to address and resolve conflict (through specialized counseling programs, therapy, domestic violence victim support groups, youth mediation training and relationships with supportive mentors).

Recommend help for parents.

- Try to ensure that domestic violence victims are treated fairly by the legal system and not further blamed in child abuse/neglect proceedings.
- Advocate in your community for things like housing, emergency shelters, legal procedures and court advocates that increase the safety of mothers and children and support the autonomy of the adult victim.
- Encourage parenting classes for battered parents focused on empowering them to become more effective parents and teaching them how to help children cope with the consequences of witnessing domestic violence.
- Advocate for treatment programs for batterers, followed by parenting classes focused on how to parent in a non-coercive, healthy manner.
- Be alert to any signs that domestic violence has recurred or even that contact between the batterer and the victim is ongoing, if that might compromise the child's safety. The foremost issue is the safety of the child.
- Know where the victim can find help in your community.

The facilitator will distribute a list of domestic violence resources in your community. Or, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) 1-800-787-3224 (TDD).

A Child's 911 Call: Activity 6B

Part 1: Listen as the facilitator plays a recording of a child's 911 call during a domestic violence incident in her home.

Part 2: Look through the chart that lists some possible signs of childhood domestic violence and discuss. Remember that different children respond to childhood domestic violence differently. Becoming aware of common signs associated with children's exposure to violence will help you better assess a child's safety needs.

Part 3: In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- What effects might witnessing domestic violence have on Lisa (age 6) and her two younger siblings?
- What services might you recommend for Lisa's family, including Lisa, her mother, her stepfather, her younger sister (preschool-aged) and the baby?
- Reflecting on Tips for CASA/GAL Volunteers, how might a CASA/GAL volunteer approach a first interview with Lisa? Do you see any barriers to interviewing a 6-year-old exposed to domestic violence? How might a CASA/GAL volunteer overcome these barriers?

Signs of Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV)

	Infant	Preschool-Aged	School-Aged	Adolescent
Behavior	Being Fussy / Decreased Responsiveness / Trouble Sleeping / Trouble Eating	Aggression / Behavior Problems / Yelling / Irritability / Trouble Sleeping / Frequent bedwetting / Repetitive play expressing disturbing themes	Aggression / Acting out or frequent outbursts / Disobedience / Bullying others / Frequent bedwetting / Repetitive play expressing disturbing themes	Dating violence / Bullying others / Drug or alcohol use / Criminal behavior / Running away / Attempting suicide / Inflicting self-harm / Frequent tardiness or absence from school, activities, or work / Early sexual activity
Social		Trouble interacting with or getting along with peers / Isolating themselves from others / Startling easily and frequently	Fewer and poor quality peer relations	Few quality relationships / Dating violence (victim or perpetrator) / Teen pregnancy / Starting easily and frequently
Emotional/ Psychological	Attachment needs not met	Emotionally withdrawn or detached / Fear and anxiety, sadness, worry / PTSD / Feeling unsafe / Separation anxiety / Trouble eating	Emotionally withdrawn or detached / Frequent physical complaints / Fear and anxiety, depression / Separation anxiety / Low self-esteem, shame / PTSD / Emotional responses not matching situation / Trouble eating / Frequent health complaints	Emotionally withdrawn or detached / Substance abuse / Frequent thoughts of suicide / PTSD / Feeling rage, shame / Unresponsiveness / Frequent health complaints

Signs of Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV)

	Infant	Preschool-Aged	School-Aged	Adolescent
Cognitive	Inability to understand	Self-blame / Difficulty trusting others / Bad dreams / Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the issue / Difficulty concentrating / Lower verbal skills	Self-blame / Distracted, inattentive / Lack of interest in hobbies or activities / Academic problems / Pro-violent attitude / Difficulty trusting others / Bad dreams / Illusions, hallucinations and flashbacks / Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the issue / Difficulty concentrating / Lower verbal skills and reading levels	Short attention span, difficulty concentrating / Lower verbal skills / Lack of interest in hobbies or activities / Pro-violent attitude / Defensiveness / Difficulty trusting others

Challenges You May Face: Activity 6C

Part 1: Which of the situations on this list would you find the hardest to work with? Put a checkmark next to the three you'd find hardest. What are your "hot buttons"?

- A parent who spends most of her money on drugs
- A parent who believes his wife/partner deserves the beatings he gives her
- A parent who lies to you
- A parent who lives in a deplorably dirty home with human/animal waste and no water
- A parent who fondles his 4-year-old child
- A parent who used drugs during her pregnancy
- A parent who refuses to take the medication that controls his mood swings
- A parent who left his children in the car in a parking lot while he went drinking at bars until closing time
- A parent who won't leave the man who physically abuses her in front of her children
- A parent who is so depressed she doesn't get out of bed for weeks at a time

Part 2: In pairs, discuss the following questions:

- Which situations did you pick as your top three and why?
- How might your values, thoughts and feelings about these situations impact your effectiveness as a CASA/GAL volunteer?

Part 3: The facilitator will ask a few volunteers to share answers with the large group.

Skill Building: Cultural Competence

Exploring Culture and Perceptions: Activity 6D

Recall the activity on Exploring Culture and Perceptions that you have completed as Pre-Work. Discuss any questions that you may have.

Culturally Competent Child Advocacy: Activity 6E

Recall the activity on Culturally Competent Child Advocacy that you have completed as Pre-Work. Listen to the facilitator provide a brief overview of differences between stereotyping and cultural competence and the “10 Benefits of Practicing Culturally Competent Child Advocacy.” Reflect on the questions in the Institutional Bias Checklist. Discuss any questions that you may have.

An Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence: Activity 6F



Recall the article “Tips on How to Become More Culturally Competent” that you read as part of Pre-Work. Also, recall the Individual Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence that you have prepared. Listen as the facilitator provides a brief overview of the article and the purpose of the plan. There are many resources in your community for increasing your cultural competence. Consider going to the following places to learn more:

- Your local library
- Museums
- A university in your community
- The Internet
- Community agencies (such as the health department)
- Communities of faith
- Community groups focusing on the cultural traditions and norms of particular cultural or language groups
- Community groups providing health services to particular cultural or language groups

Can you think of any particular resources in your community for expanding your cultural competence? Remember, while race and ethnicity are often the first things that come to mind when people think of the word “culture,” there are many other aspects to culture—and many ways to develop cultural competence in every community. Share your ideas in the large group.

Working a Case

The Amarillo Case: Activity 6G



Part 1: Your group will receive a hard copy of the initial case file for the Amarillo case, which you read for homework. Take several minutes to re-familiarize yourself with the information in this case file. You will also receive a list of questions that your Questioner should remind your group to consider as you review documents and make your recommendations. After you review the initial case file, send your Runner to the facilitator to request an additional document (either an interview transcript from a key player you'd like to speak with or another important document you'd find during a case). You may continue to request additional interviews and documents, one at a time, over the course of 35 minutes, to complete your information gathering for the case at this stage. After 35 minutes, your Scribe should legibly write on the flipchart your group's recommendations to the court regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions.

Part 2: Take a few minutes to view other groups' recommendations, and then briefly discuss the debrief questions that the facilitator distributes. In the large group, discuss these questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Summarizing the Current Status of a Case: Activity 6H

Part 1: Using your program's court report format, write a two- or three-paragraph summary of the current status of the Amarillo case based on the notes and interviews you read in the previous activity. Your summary should include both the current status of the case and the current status of the child, and it should be typed on a computer.

Part 2: In the large group, discuss what you included in your summary. The facilitator will point out any key omissions.

Chapter Wrap-Up and Review

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 6 Volunteer Training Evaluation, and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Chapter 7 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 7 training session, complete the following assignments:

- **Resilience**

Watch the video “How Resilience Is Built,” which appears in the Chapter 7 Online Resources, and think about relationships you had as a youth that helped you build resilience. (The video is 2 minutes, 17 seconds.)

- **Childhood Reflections**

Listen to “Childhood Reflections,” an audio recording of adults who spent time in the child welfare system speaking about their childhoods and some of the ways the youth exhibited resilience. Prepare a list of ways you think resilience was exhibited.

- **Aging Out Statistics**

Read “Statistics on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care,” which appears in the Chapter 7 Pre-Work Handouts.

- **Ecological Model of Factors Affecting Resilience**

Go through the Ecological Model of Factors Affecting Resilience diagram and the factors affecting resilience shown on the graphic (e.g., a child’s thoughts and behaviors, family, school, local community, and the wider society).

- **Concurrent Planning**

Read the paragraphs about concurrent planning and the lists of questions that follow.

Chapter Wrap-Up, Cont'd.

- **Review Greene and Amarillo Cases**

Reread or review the Greene and Amarillo cases.

- **Educational Challenges for Children in the Child Welfare System**

Read up on educational challenges for children in the child welfare system. Answer the questions on their K-12 experiences provided in Pre-Work.

- **The Brown Case**

Read the initial case notes for the Brown case in the Chapter 7 Pre-Work Handouts. You will be applying what you know about this case during various activities in the next chapter.





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CHAPTER SEVEN

HEARST *foundations*



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CHAPTER 7:


Educational Advocacy, Older Youth and LGBTQ Youth


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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 7:
Pre-Work Recap,





- ✓ Watch the video "How Resilience Is Built" and think about relationships you had as a youth that helped you build resilience.
- ✓ Listen to the audio clip "[Childhood Reflections](#)".
- ✓ Read the Statistics on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, which appears in the Chapter 7 Online Resources.
- ✓ Read the Initial Case Notes for the Brown Case.
- ✓ Go through the Ecological Model of Factors Affecting Resilience.

3

Prior to this training session, you should complete the following Pre-Work assignments:

- Watch the video "How Resilience Is Built" and think about relationships you had as a youth that helped you build resilience.
- Listen to the audio clip "Childhood Reflections."
- Read the Statistics on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, which appears in the Chapter 7 Online Resources.
- Read the Initial Case Notes for the Brown Case.
- Go through the Ecological Model of Factors Affecting Resilience diagram.
- Read the article on Concurrent Planning and prepare to answer the lists of questions that follow.
- Re-read the Greene Case and the Amarillo case.
- Read the article on Educational Challenges for Children in the Child Welfare System.
- Prepare answers to questions that follow based on your K-12 experiences.

Chapter Overview and Competencies

This chapter addresses issues related to resilience and permanence, children's educational needs, advocating for older youth and the challenges faced by LGBTQ youth in the system. You'll also continue to explore cultural competence and child welfare law.

Competency Building in Chapter 7

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills, Attributes, Behavior Development in Chapter 7
Foundation of Knowledge	<p>Understands the factors that contribute to a child's resilience</p> <p>Understands the importance of resilience in overcoming trauma in children</p> <p>Understands concurrent planning</p> <p>Understands options for permanence for the child</p> <p>Understands how CASA/GAL advocacy differs for young children and older youth</p> <p>Knows strategies to address educational challenges</p> <p>Understands the issues faced by LGBTQ youth in the child welfare system</p>

Permanence

Revisiting Resilience: Activity 7A

Part 1: Recall the “Childhood Reflections” audio clip that you listened to as part of the Pre-Work, where adults who spent time in the child welfare system speak about their childhoods as well as the video “How Resilience is Built” that you also were assigned to watch. In the large group, share your ideas on some of the ways resilience was exhibited. Recall the concept of ecological model of resilience that you went through as part of Pre-Work.

Part 2: The facilitator will divide you into groups and assign each group to reflect back on either the Greene case or the Amarillo case. Find three factors on the diagram that are present in Marky’s or Maria’s case—factors related to Marky’s and Maria’s thoughts, behaviors and skills; their families; their schools and local communities; and the wider society. In your group, discuss the following questions:

- What impact did these factors have on the case?
- As a CASA/GAL volunteer, how could you help nurture resilience in Marky or Maria?

Share your responses in the large group.

Bailey's Story and the Importance of Permanence: Activity 7B

Part 1: Watch "Bailey's Story" from *Stories of Aging Out*. After the video, listen as the facilitator presents the information below about permanence.

Part 2: Working in pairs, answer the following questions:

- In what ways did Bailey find permanence? In what ways didn't she?
- How could a CASA/GAL volunteer have made a difference in Bailey's case?

Share your ideas in the large group.

Permanence



Children are born unable to survive on their own. They need someone to provide life's basic necessities: food, shelter, protection from harm. To get beyond survival and reach normal growth and developmental milestones, children require a "primary attachment figure:" an adult who "is there for them," whom they can count on, who consistently meets their emotional and physical needs. For most children, this role is filled by a biological parent or parents. However, one or more other caring adults, who are willing to commit unconditionally to the child, can also meet the child's need for permanence.

When a child enters the child welfare system, the belief that a parent "will always be there" is shattered.

One of your primary goals as a CASA/GAL volunteer is to advocate for a safe, permanent home as soon as possible, honoring the child's culture and sense of time. While there is never a guarantee of permanence, having such intentions can ensure that you are working toward a plan that supports permanence.

At a very basic level, permanence is most probable when the legal parent is also the emotional parent as well as the *parenting figure present in the child's life*.

There are a limited number of possible "permanent" options:

1. Return to parent
2. Adoption (by a relative or nonrelative)
3. Kinship Guardianship

The third option, placement and custody or guardianship with relatives or fictive kin, while not truly "permanent," is sometimes considered an appropriate choice when the first two options are not practical.

What Is Kinship Guardianship?

Kinship guardianship is a subsidized alternative to adoption for children or youth who have been placed with relatives (or, in some cases, fictive kin) who are certified foster parents and who have been placed with that relative for six months or more. Unlike adoption of a child in foster care, kinship guardianship does not require the surrendering or termination of parental rights.

Permanence, Cont'd.

Like adoption of a child in foster care, kinship guardianship is subsidized, meaning that the guardianship will receive a monthly subsidy to provide for the care of the child. In theory, kinship guardianship is a less permanent option because parents can petition the court to regain custody, provided that there have been substantial changes in their circumstances. Parents may also petition the court for visitation.

What Is Fictive Kin?

A more recent development in the consideration of permanency options for children is the introduction of fictive kin. Fictive kin are individuals who, while they may not be related to a child by blood, adoption or marriage, play an important role in a child's life. In short, they act as family even though they may not be family in the strict legal meaning of the word. Increasingly, courts are allowing for fictive kin to be considered in cases of kinship guardianship or to petition the court for custody or guardianship in the same way a relative might.

Long-Term Foster Care: An Impermanent Option

Despite the advocacy efforts of CASA/GAL volunteers and the hard work by caseworkers, many children remain in foster care. These children live in foster homes or group homes—or move from placement to placement during their time in care.

Long-term foster care becomes the plan for older children or children labeled as difficult* for whom there is no identified family. Sometimes these children are actually placed in a family setting but their caregivers do not want to adopt them. In any case when the plan is permanent foster care, what the child protective services system is actually doing is planning for these children to belong to no one. Clearly this is unacceptable. When faced with this as the “only” alternative, it is our obligation to insist that this not be the end of the planning process, but rather the beginning of a new dialogue around how to make permanence a reality, even for the most “difficult” child.

*At times children diagnosed with ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), autism, PTSD and other disorders are labeled as difficult or challenging.

Permanence, Cont'd.

Cultural Considerations

It is important to know that some Native Americans have a strong bias against adoption and certain tribes do not approve of adoption. This requires special consideration when weighing the permanency options for an Indian child who is an identified member of a tribe. In some cases, placement with a Native American custodian can truly be considered permanent.

Concurrent Planning: Activity 7C

Recall the article you read on Concurrent Planning and the lists of questions that follow as part of Pre-Work. Choose the case of either Marky Greene or Maria Amarillo. As you read through the questions to consider, reflect on the case you have chosen and formulate answers to the questions while thinking about options for permanence.

Educational Advocacy

Educational Challenges for Children in Care: Activity 7D

Recall the information that you read about educational challenges for children in the child welfare system as part of Pre-Work. After the facilitator divides the class into two groups, fill out the Educational Advocacy Quick Assessment Form as if you were the CASA/GAL volunteer for either Marky Greene or Maria Amarillo. Once you've finished, the facilitator will pass out the notes of an expert who has reviewed the Greene and Amarillo cases, and give you a moment to compare them to your group's notes.

In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- How might a tool like this be helpful in a case with an older youth?
- How might it be helpful in a case with a younger or even preschool-aged child?
- How might it be helpful in preventing problems and intervening early so that students can be successful?

Educational Advocacy Quick Assessment Form

1. Student's name	
2. School name	
3. Grade	
4. Special needs/IEP requirements	
5. Evidence of behavioral problems/ excessive absence	
6. Grade Point Average	
7. Seeing school social worker or any other support personnel?	
8. Extracurricular activities	
9. Need for tutoring?	
10. On track to graduate?	
11. Received resources for post-HS education or vocational program?	
12. Other pertinent information	

Advocating for Older Youth

Comparing Advocacy Across Age Ranges: Activity 7E

As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you will fulfill your basic role regardless of the age of the child: information gathering, facilitating, advocating and monitoring a case. However, as the age of the youth changes so will your role. You should expect the focus of your advocacy to evolve as the older youth nears the age of emancipation from the foster care system.

The facilitator will show you pairs of guiding principles for advocacy. In the large group, decide which of the principles apply when working with children in infancy to the early teen years and which apply to adolescent youth. The facilitator will share comparisons between the age ranges for each principle.

Afterward, discuss the following question in the large group:

- How else do you think your role as a CASA/GAL volunteer, working with an older youth, may differ from your role working with a child age 13 or younger?

Advocating for Older Youth: Activity 7F

Considering the statistics about youth aging out of the foster care system, which you read for Pre-Work, think about what the outcome for Maria Amarillo might be if she remained in foster care until aging out and did not receive help navigating through the systems indicated below. In the space provided, list what issues Maria might face in the various systems an older youth encounters:

Education

House or Living Situation

Mental Health

Employment

Finances

Share what you wrote in the large group.

Advocating for LGBTQ Youth: Activity 7G

There is a disproportionate number of LGBTQ youth in foster care. At home, LGBTQ youth are more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to face disapproval, abuse and neglect. Family conflict often becomes so intense that the youth are forced to leave home. Once in the child welfare system, many LGBTQ youth continue to be misunderstood, facing abuse, harassment and isolation. In foster homes and group care facilities, LGBTQ youth are often mistreated and even harmed by staff, caregivers and other young people.

Part 1: Think back to when you were a child or teenager. Did your peers ever make fun of you for any part of who you were? If so, how did you feel or respond? Did you make fun of anyone else? How did they respond? Write down your responses. You will not be asked to share them.

Part 2: Watch “Randy’s Story” from *Digital Stories from the Field*. Then, in the large group, discuss the following questions:

- How do you think a youth’s sexual orientation affects his or her identity?
- What obstacles might LGBTQ youth encounter in foster care that would hinder their ability to maintain their identity?
- Do you think these obstacles are unique to LGBTQ youth? If so, why? If not, how are these issues transferable to youth in other situations?
- How could a CASA/GAL volunteer have advocated for Randy?

Working a Case

The Brown Case: Activity 7H



Part 1: Your group will receive a hard copy of the initial file for the Brown case, which you read for Pre-Work. Take several minutes to re-familiarize yourself with the information in this case file. You will also receive a list of questions that your Questioner should remind your group to consider as you review documents and make your recommendations. After you review the initial case file, send your Runner to the facilitator to request an additional document (either an interview transcript from a key player you'd like to speak with or another important document you'd find during a case). You may continue to request additional interviews and documents one at a time over the course of 35 minutes in order to complete your information gathering for the case at this stage. After 35 minutes, your Scribe should legibly write on the flipchart your group's recommendations to the court regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions.

Part 2: Take a few minutes to view other groups' recommendations, and then briefly discuss with your group the debrief questions that the facilitator distributes. In the large group, discuss these questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Working the Resources Section of a Court Report: Activity 7I

Based on the Brown case notes and interviews you read in the previous activity, write the family and community resources section of the court report, which describes strengths, skills or previous successful coping instances of the biological family; any resources within the extended family to provide connection, respite or additional help; and community resources that might provide additional support or services.

Once you have written your summary, turn to a partner and compare what you wrote. Were there any differences between the two? What do you think accounts for those differences?

Chapter Wrap-up

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter.

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 7 Volunteer Training Evaluation and give it to the facilitator before you leave.

Additional Resources for Reference

- Beyond Alphabet Soup: Some Key Acronyms in Education Advocacy
- Laws Related to Older Youth in Foster Care
- LGBTQ Glossary
- Statistical Profile of Foster Youth:

<https://www.fosterclub.com/sites/default/files/foster-graphic-horizontal-large-gallery.jpeg>

Chapter 8 Pre-Work

Prior to the Chapter 8 training session, complete the following assignments:

Developing Competencies Worksheet

Bring the Developing Competencies checklist that you filled out at the beginning of training, to the Chapter 8 session. You will revisit it during this chapter.

The Redd Case

Read the Initial Case Notes for the Redd Case, which the facilitator will distribute. You will be writing a court report for the Redd Case during Chapter 8, so bring these documents with you to the training session.

Chapter 8 Pre-Work, Cont'd.

The Redd Case Study

As the final case study, the Redd Case offers a chance for you to use the information, skills, and knowledge that you have learned during the pre-service training. Read the Redd Case Study packet with all the interviews and come prepared for Chapter 8 session.

Program Court Report Template

Using the Program's Court Report Template provided in the Local/Program Pre-Work Handouts, write a court report. This is an opportunity for you to apply what you have learned from the training and to demonstrate your readiness to work independently on a case. You will get a week to complete the activity.



CASA

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FOR CHILDREN

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

CASA/GAL Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

Volunteer Manual

CHAPTER EIGHT

HEARST *foundations*



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CHAPTER 8:

Wrapping Up

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Pre-Work Recap

Chapter 8: Pre-Work Recap



- ✓ Bring to the Chapter 8 session, the Developing Competencies checklist that you filled out at the beginning of training. Review the checklist and identify the competency categories that you still need to strengthen and the steps that you plan to take
- ✓ Read the Initial Case Notes for the Redd Case. Bring these documents with you to the training session
- ✓ Read the Redd Case packet with all the interviews
- ✓ Complete the Program's Court Report Template provided based on Redd Case Notes and submit for evaluation to Facilitator

3

Prior to this training session, you should have completed the following Pre-Work assignments:

- Bring the Developing Competencies checklist that you filled out at the beginning of training, to the Chapter 8 session. Review the checklist of competencies. Identify the competency categories that you still need to strengthen and the steps that you plan to take.
- Read the Initial Case Notes for the Redd Case. Bring these documents with you to the training session.
- Read the Redd Case packet with all the interviews.
- Complete the Program's Court Report Template provided, based on Redd Case Notes, and submit for evaluation to the facilitator.

Chapter Overview and Competencies

During this chapter, you will work independently on a final case study and write a full court report. You will also review what you've learned and what competencies you've strengthened during training, and you'll hear from a panel of current volunteers.

Competency Building in Chapter 8	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills, Attributes, Behavior Development in Chapter 8
CASA/GAL Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands the function of a CASA/GAL report to the court• Understands the competencies necessary to succeed as a CASA/GAL volunteer• Knows how to act within the CASA/GAL volunteer role and can differentiate his/her role from that of others involved in the case• Knows how to find support and resources to assist his/her advocacy
Sound Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands making appropriate fact based recommendations to the court• Understands basing decisions on thorough review of the information

Working a Case

The Redd Case: Activity 8A

This activity provides the opportunity to use the information, skills, and knowledge you have gained during the volunteer training program on one last case study.

Recall the Redd Case Interviews that you went through as part of Pre-Work, and the court report that you prepared, based on the Redd Case, and submitted to the facilitator. Listen as the facilitator provides a brief overview of the case and the elements of a good court report. Listen to the debrief of the case study and discuss any concerns or questions.

Training Review

General Review: Activity 8B

Part 1: On the sticky notes provided, write one question you have about at least four of the following topics: the CASA/GAL volunteer role, child welfare system and laws, cultural competence, working with children, working with families, communication skills and working a case. Once you've written your questions, post them on the corresponding flipcharts.

Part 2: Walk around the room, visiting each flipchart. If there are questions that you know the answers to, based on your experience or based on this training, jot the answer down on a sticky note and stick it next to the corresponding question on the flipchart. Continue to walk around the room to see if others answered the questions you posted; see what other questions and answers your fellow training participants posted. Then, in the large group, discuss any unanswered questions.

Expectations Review

Assessing Your Course Expectations: Activity 8C

Review the Expectations chart that you created during the Chapter 1 training session. The facilitator will cross out each expectation that the class believes was met during the course of this training program. The facilitator will address—or make a plan to address—any remaining expectations.

Looking Ahead

Panel of Volunteers: Activity 8D

Listen as a panel of CASA/GAL volunteers describe their experiences in the areas below. There will be time at the end for questions.

- Receiving a court order or assignment
- Meeting a child
- Assessing a child's needs
- Building a relationship with caseworkers
- Building a relationship with attorneys
- Following a case as it progresses
- Making recommendations in court (or, generally, how to act/speak up in court)
- How to persevere when times get tough
- How to organize materials
- How not to get too emotionally attached

Finding Support: Activity 8E

Part 1: Turn to a partner and describe what kinds of support you think you'll need as a CASA/GAL volunteer.

Part 2: Recall the activity on CASA/GAL Volunteer Competencies Review that you have completed as part of Pre-Work. Recall that you had made plans to strengthen your competencies. You would need support to implement these plans. Share your ideas on what kinds of support you'll need. Then, listen as the facilitator describes the various sources of support you can expect during your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer.

Support for CASA/GAL Volunteers



As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you need support in the work you do. Your work touches many disciplines—child abuse and neglect, criminal justice, child growth and development, family systems, social services, and child welfare law. Few people are experts in all these fields. As CASA/GAL volunteers, you come from all walks of life and have various work and educational backgrounds. You are effective advocates because you work energetically and creatively to improve the lives of abused and neglected children. You need support and encouragement as you make recommendations to the court about what is in the best interests of the children for whom you advocate.

Program Staff Support

A strong relationship with program staff is vital; they will assign cases, monitor case progress, review reports and records, and help solve problems. They can offer resources, answer questions, and support you in your work.

In-Service Training

In-service training allows you to take advantage of opportunities for additional learning about the many facets of CASA/GAL volunteer work that are introduced in this core training curriculum. National CASA standards require 12 hours per year of in-service training. Local program staff will outline the resources available for in-service training.

Peer Relationships

Within program guidelines, working with other CASA/GAL volunteers is an effective way to strategize, problem-solve, and get moral support in this work.

Self-Care/Personal Support Networks

Because of the time demands, stress, and frustrations that can be part of CASA/GAL volunteer work, it is important to have social and emotional support and to take care of yourself so you don't burn out.

Support for CASA/GAL Volunteers, Cont'd.

Additional Resources

Following is a list of additional resources you can use to continue your education:

- Local, state and national website/newsletter/e-news
- Local resource list
- National CASA website
 - Advocacy library
 - E-learning opportunities
- National CASA Facebook page

Next Steps: Activity 8F

Listen as the facilitator and local program staff explain additional logistical information regarding your program and what to expect as you begin your service as a CASA/GAL volunteer. You'll also find out when and how you'll be sworn in as CASA/GAL volunteers.

Chapter Wrap-Up

Review

Share any remaining questions you have about the material covered in this chapter.

Evaluation

Fill out the Chapter 8 Volunteer Training Evaluation and the Post-Training Assessment, and give them to the facilitator before you leave.

Congratulations! And thanks for participating in this training!

Glossary

Glossary

The following list defines commonly used medical, psychological, sociological, legal, and educational terms and definitions as they apply to matters of child welfare and the juvenile court system.

Abandonment

Act of a parent or caretaker leaving a child without adequate supervision or provision for his/her needs for an excessive period of time. State statute may define a certain period of time as constituting legal abandonment.

Abrasion

Wound in which an area of the body surface is scraped of skin or mucous membrane.

Abused Juvenile

Defined by state statute. Generally, the child recipient of any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted other than by accidental means by a person responsible for his/her care, custody, and control.

Acculturation

The process of integrating into a culture other than one's own.

Adjudication

The process of delivering a judicial decision as to whether the facts alleged in a petition or other pleading are true.

Adjudicatory Hearing

The full court proceeding in which it is determined whether the allegations of the petition are supported by legally admissible evidence.

Adoption

The social, emotional, and legal process through which children who will not be raised by their birth parents become full and permanent legal members of another family. Adoption as a formal legal process is not found in most tribal cultures. Cultural adoptions as a traditional practice may be formalized

through a ceremony, such as a naming ceremony. Cultural adoptions establish relationships for family that are referenced from that point forward.

Adoption Assistance & Child Welfare Act of 1980 (PL 96-272)

Federal law mandating that in order to be eligible for federal funds, states must document that they have when possible made reasonable efforts to provide preventive and reunification services to families when children have been placed out of the home. Removal of children from the home must be pursuant to a judicial determination and there must be periodic reviews of the case.

Affidavit

A statement of facts, which is sworn to (or affirmed) before an officer who has authority to administer an oath (e.g., a notary public). Before signing this statement, the person signing takes an oath that the contents are, to the best of his/her knowledge, true. It is also signed by the person administering the oath, to affirm that the person signing the affidavit was under oath when doing so. These documents carry great weight in courts to the extent that judges frequently accept an affidavit in place of the testimony of the witness.

Aggravated Circumstances

Any factor involved in the commission of an act of abuse or neglect that increases its enormity or adds to its injurious consequences, including, but not limited to, abandonment, torture, chronic abuse, or sexual abuse.

Allegation

An assertion or statement of a party to a legal action, which sets out what he/she expects to prove.

Anxiety

The anticipation of future threat. A typical response to life stressors, it reaches the level of a diagnosable disorder when feelings of anxiety and worry are persistent, excessive, and difficult to control.

Appeal

The attempt to have a final order of a trial court changed by seeking review of a higher court. Usually appeals are made and decided on questions of law only; issues of fact (e.g., did the minor suffer an accident, or was he

intentionally injured?) are left to the trial judge or jury, and seldom can be decided in an appeal.

Arraignment

The bringing of a person accused of a crime before a court to be advised of the charges against him/her and to state his/her answer to the charges.

Assault

Intentional or reckless threat of, or actual, physical injury to a person. Aggravated assault is committed with the intention of carrying out a threat of other crimes. Simple assault is committed without the intention of carrying out the threat of other crimes or if the attempt at injury is not complete.

Attachment

The psychological connection between people that permits them to have significance to each other. An affectionate bond between two individuals that endures through space and time and serves to join them emotionally. A strong and enduring bond of love that develops between a child and the person(s) he/she interacts with most frequently.

Attention-Deficit Disorder with or without Hyperactivity (AD/HD)

A behavioral diagnosis in which children exhibit a pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity that interferes with functioning. AD/HD behaviors include having difficulty staying focused, seeming not to listen, and excessive fidgeting or talking. Thought to be caused by both inherited and environmental factors. Treatable through behavior management and/or the use of medication.

Autism

A developmental disability affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction. It is generally evident before age three. In young children with autism, lack of social and communication abilities may hinder learning, especially learning through social interaction.

Bailiff

A law enforcement officer, usually a deputy sheriff, assigned to a courtroom to keep peace and assist the judge, courtroom clerks, witnesses, and jury. A court attendant whose actual duties vary according to jurisdiction and judge but often include maintaining order in the courtroom.

Battered Child Syndrome

A medical condition, primarily seen in infants and young children. Evidence of the syndrome includes repeated nonaccidental injury to the nerves, skin, or skeletal system. Frequently, the history given by the caretaker does not explain the nature of occurrence of the injuries. Also called parent-infant-trauma syndrome (PITS) or maltreatment syndrome.

Best Interest of the Child

Standard for the court to use in deciding the disposition of a case following an adjudication of abuse, neglect, or dependency, and TPR proceeding. The standard that the CASA/GAL volunteer uses in choosing a course of advocacy for every child.

Bias

A personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment.

Bonding

The psychological attachment of caregiver (usually mother) to child, which develops during and immediately following childbirth. The aptitude for bonding, which appears to be crucial to the development of a healthy parent-child relationship, may be observed immediately following delivery to help identify potential families-at-risk.

Burden of Proof

The duty to prove allegations of a petition in a court hearing. It is the petitioner's responsibility to prove the case. Neither the child nor the parents have the duty to explain unproven allegations.

Calendar

The court calendar is the list of cases to be called for hearing before a particular judge.

Caretaker

Any person other than a parent, guardian, or custodian who has responsibility for the health and welfare of a juvenile in a residential setting, including a stepparent, foster parent, an adult member of the juvenile's household, an adult relative entrusted with the juvenile's care, or any person such as a house parent or cottage parent who has primary responsibility for supervising

ing a juvenile's health and welfare in a residential child care facility or residential educational facility.

CASA/GAL Volunteer

A volunteer child advocate who works to see that a child's best interest is served in a court case.

Cerebral Palsy

A disability resulting from damage to those parts of the brain that control and coordinate the muscles. This brain damage occurs before or during birth or in the first few years of life. Causes are lack of oxygen to the developing brain, infections or disease, physical injury, premature birth, or maternal-child blood type incompatibility. Cerebral palsy is neither hereditary nor contagious. About seven hundred thousand people in the United States have cerebral palsy. Specific characteristics, which may occur alone or in combination, include spasticity, marked by tense, contracted muscles; athetosis, involuntary exaggerated movements of the arms, legs, and head; and ataxia, poor sense of balance and depth perception. Cerebral palsy may occur with other disabilities.

Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB)

Document developed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to identify Indian heritage and eligibility for services.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (PL 93-247)

Act introduced and promoted in Congress by U.S. Senator Walter Mondale and signed into law on January 31, 1974. The act established the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect in the HEW Children's Bureau and authorized annual appropriations. The purpose of the center is to conduct and compile research, provide an information clearinghouse, compile and publish training materials, provide technical assistance, investigate national incidence, and fund demonstration projects related to prevention, identification, and treatment.

Child Advocacy

Strategy for intervention in which a helping person assumes an active role in assisting or supporting a specific child and/or family or a cause on behalf of children and/or families. This could involve finding and facilitating services for specific cases, developing new services, or promoting program coordina-

tion. The advocate uses his/her power to meet clients' needs or to promote causes.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

The agency with exclusive power to file abuse, neglect, or dependency petitions in court. Names for this agency vary.

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

A pattern of behavior in a child who is being sexually abused. The child victim will progress through five stages: secrecy, helplessness, entrapment and accommodation, delayed and conflicting disclosure, and retraction. Large numbers of children and their parents in proven cases of child sexual abuse exhibit this behavior pattern in order to maintain the child abuse victim within the family. However, such abuse tends to isolate the child from eventual acceptance and credibility within the larger society.

Civil Proceeding

Also called a "civil action." Includes all lawsuits other than criminal prosecutions. Juvenile and family court cases are civil proceedings.

Clear, Cogent, and Convincing

The level of proof sometimes required in a civil case for the plaintiff to prevail. It means the judge (or jury, in some court settings) must be persuaded by the evidence that it is highly probable that the claim or affirmative defense is true. The clear and convincing evidence standard is a heavier burden than the preponderance of evidence standard but less than beyond a reasonable doubt. This is the level of proof needed to grant emergency custody or to terminate parental rights (except in ICWA cases). See also Standard of Proof.

Clerk of Court

An officer appointed by the court to work with the chief judge in overseeing the court's administration, especially to assist in managing the flow of cases through the court and to maintain court records.

Community-Based Program

A program providing nonresidential or residential services to a juvenile in the community where his/her family lives. A community-based program may

include specialized foster care, family counseling, shelter care, and other appropriate services.

Competency

The legal fitness or ability of a witness to be heard on the trial of a case. All persons are presumed to be competent witnesses, including very young children. A person challenging a witness's competency must show that the witness either cannot communicate information to the judge or jury or doesn't comprehend the difference between right and wrong.

Concurrent Planning

A permanency planning strategy for assuring an expedient permanent placement for a child. Planning for reunification occurs simultaneously with the development of alternative permanency plans, including adoption, to be used in the event that it is not possible for the child to return to his/her family of origin.

Concussion

An injury to the soft structure of the brain resulting from violent shaking or jarring.

Confidentiality

Protection from public scrutiny of information that must be kept confidential. In child abuse and neglect matters, the CASA/GAL volunteer has access to all records pertaining to the child (unless federally protected), but may release such information to other parties only by court order or as designated by law.

Conflict Resolution

The capacity to resolve conflicts without having to resort to aggression. The process of conflict resolution may be done with the assistance of a neutral third party.

Congenital

Refers to any physical condition present at birth.

Consent Order

An official agreement by all parties to settle the case upon certain specified terms and submit it to the judge for approval.

Contempt

Any willful disobedience to or disregard of a court order, or any misconduct in the presence of a court. An action that interferes with a judge's ability to administer justice or that insults the dignity of the court. Punishable by fine or imprisonment or both.

Continued or Continuance

Instance when a trial, hearing, or other court appearance is postponed to a later date. This is done by order of the court or upon agreement by the parties' attorneys and approved by the court. In most cases, the new hearing date is set at the time of the continuance.

Corporal Punishment

Physical punishment inflicted directly upon the body.

Court Order/Judgment

Directive issued by the court, having the authority of the court, and enforceable by law.

Court Report

A written document presented to the court by the CASA/GAL volunteer stating the needs of the child and recommendations for disposition that would meet those needs.

Credibility

Believability of a person, especially a witness.

Criminal Prosecution

The process involving the filing of charges of a crime, followed by arraignment and trial of the defendant. Criminal prosecution may result in fines, imprisonment, and/or probation. Criminal defendants are entitled to acquittal unless charges against them are proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Technical rules of evidence exclude many kinds of proof in criminal trials, even though that proof might be admissible in civil proceedings.

Cross-Examination

The questioning of an opposing party's witness about matters brought up during direct examination.

Cultural Awareness

A set of attitudes, beliefs, and actions based on continuing exploration of, understanding of, and respect for individual and cultural differences.

Culture

A learned pattern of customs, beliefs, and behaviors, socially acquired and socially transmitted through symbols and widely shared meanings. Culture is an organized group of learned responses—a system of ready-made solutions to the problems of people.

Custodian

The person or agency that has been awarded legal custody of a juvenile by a court. This may also be a person, other than a parent or legal guardian, who has assumed the status and obligation of a parent without being awarded the legal custody of a juvenile by a court.

Custody

The right to a child's care and control, carrying with it the duty of providing food, shelter, medical care, education, and discipline.

Cystic Fibrosis

A genetic disease characterized by severe respiratory and digestive problems. The disorder involves the body's inability to regulate salt secretions. This inability leads to damage of the lungs and pancreas. It also limits the child's ability to conserve salt. Children with cystic fibrosis have chronic lung infections, scarring on their lungs that leads to lung disease, and a pancreas that does not function well. The latter causes juvenile diabetes. The child may also dehydrate quickly during exercise. Children and teens suffering from cystic fibrosis require pulmonary therapy several times a day to clear their lungs.

Deficit Model

A method of assessing and treating family or individual problems that focuses on a family's weaknesses, and sets as the primary goal getting them off public services. In this model, it is the caseworker's role to find out what is wrong with the family and to decide how best to "fix it."

Delinquent Juvenile

Any minor who has been found by a court of law to have committed an act that would be a crime or infraction under state law or under an ordinance of local government, including violation of the motor vehicle laws, if committed by an adult.

Dependent Juvenile

A child in need of assistance or placement because he/she has no parent, guardian, or custodian responsible for his/her care or supervision, or whose parent, guardian, or custodian is unable to provide the care or supervision and lacks an appropriate alternative child care arrangement.

Depression

The oldest recognized and most prevalent emotional disorder. Depression can be difficult to diagnose because of its various origins, manifestations, and degrees of severity. Symptoms include significant emotional changes, including a depressed mood, sadness, gloom; spells of crying; anxiety; irritability; feelings of guilt and remorse; inability to concentrate; indecisiveness and loss of interest; loss of self-confidence and self-esteem; and desire to commit suicide. Treatment for both children and adults is typically a combination of psychotherapy and psychoactive drugs. Psychological testing may be needed to identify and treat the disorder.

Developmental Disabilities

A severe, chronic disability of a person attributed to a mental or physical impairment or a combination of mental and physical impairments. A developmental disability is manifested before the person is 18 years old. It is likely to continue indefinitely and results in functional limitations in three or more of these major life activities:

1. Ability to talk and express oneself, ability to understand and follow simple directives
2. Ability to dress self, brush teeth, use the toilet, etc.
3. Ability to learn colors, shapes, letters, words, foods, and the like
4. Ability to walk, run, or sit in a manner that is acceptable
5. Ability to make decisions or to do what is expected
6. Ability to live independently
7. Ability to partially support self

Differential Diagnosis

The determination of which of two or more diseases or conditions a patient is suffering from by systematically comparing and contrasting clinical findings.

Direct Examination

The process by which an attorney questions his/her own witness in order to present information to the court necessary for that attorney's case. The questions are usually open-ended: "Tell the court about . . ." or "Describe the condition of the home."

Dismissal

Action by the judge that removes a given case from the court.

Disposition

In juvenile court, the order that determines a treatment plan for a child already proven to be abused, neglected, and/or dependent. It is the equivalent of a sentence in criminal court.

Dispositional Hearing

The juvenile court hearing in which evidence is presented and arguments made to design the most appropriate treatment and choose the most appropriate placement for the child. In many courts, the dispositional hearing immediately follows the adjudicatory hearing. This type of hearing is not bound by the strict rules of evidence required in an adjudication.

Disproportionality

- The experience of overrepresentation or underrepresentation of various groups in different social, political, or economic institutions (e.g., women are overrepresented when identifying single heads of households; African Americans and Latino Americans are overrepresented in the US prison population).

Dissociation

An involuntary, natural mechanism present in infancy and continuing throughout adulthood through which a person physically and/or mentally separates himself/herself to guard against unpleasant situations. Because children are limited in their coping abilities, they commonly use dissociation

to protect themselves from all or part of their painful experiences. Dissociation may become a preferred or automatic response in children who live in a chaotic, chronically stressful, or traumatizing environment. It is these children's loss of awareness that enables them to perform, or at least survive emotionally, in their respective environments; however, the use of protective dissociation may become so extreme that it interferes with the child's functioning and development. Children's sense of identity becomes fragmented when they regularly cope with stressful situations by disowning parts of their experiences. This fragmentation of the self may solidify into distinct patterns that are perceived by the child and others around him/her as separate personality states, or multiple personality disorder.

District Court

The name of one of the courts of the United States. It is held by a judge, called the district judge. Several courts under the same name have been established by state authority.

Domestic Violence

The willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically; however, the one constant component of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.

Dominant Group/Culture

The "mainstream" culture in a society, consisting of the people who hold the power and influence.

Down Syndrome

The most common genetic condition associated with developmental disabilities. Occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome.

Due Process

The rights of persons involved in court proceedings to be treated with fundamental fairness. These rights include the right to adequate notice in advance

of hearings, notice of allegations of misconduct, assistance of a lawyer, and the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses.

Emancipation

When a minor achieves legal independence from his/her parents by court order or by getting married before reaching the age of majority.

Emergency Custody

Residential placement of a child alleged to be abused, neglected, or dependent in a licensed foster home, a facility operated by the child protection agency, or another home or facility approved by the court. The court, pending the adjudicatory hearing, may order such placement if the judge finds that placement with the parents is unsafe.

Emergency Custody Hearing

Hearing to determine if the child's immediate welfare demands continued placement out of the home.

Emotional Abuse

The systematic diminishment of a child. It is designed to reduce a child's self-concept to the point where the child feels unworthy of respect, unworthy of friendship, unworthy of the natural birthright of all children: love and protection.

Empowerment Model

A collaborative family assistance model in which the caseworker assumes that family members know best what their strengths and problems are, and that they will be most successful in accomplishing plans they create to rectify problems. The caseworker's role is to assist them in recognizing their strengths and challenges, to support that planning process, and to assist the family in implementing their plan. This may require teaching new skills.

Epilepsy

Seizures are the primary symptom of all forms of epilepsy, which is characterized by convulsions of the muscles, partial or total loss of consciousness, mental confusion, or disturbances of bodily functions usually controlled automatically by the brain and nervous system. Epilepsy occurs in 1% of the general US population. The disorder occurs more frequently in children than in adults. In about 80% of cases, the first seizure occurs within the first

decade of life. No one knows for sure why brain cells discharge abnormally and cause the symptoms of epilepsy.

Ethnicity

A group classification in which members share a unique social and cultural heritage and pass it on from one generation to the next. Ethnicity does not have to have a biological or genetic foundation.

Ethnocentrism

The attitude that one's own cultural group is superior.

Evidence

Any sort of proof submitted to the court for the purpose of influencing the court's decision.

Exhibit

Physical evidence used in court. In a child abuse case, an exhibit may consist of x-rays, photographs of the child's injuries, or the actual materials presumably used to inflict the injuries. See also Evidence.

Ex Parte

Latin term that refers to situations in which only one party (and not the adversary) appears before a judge. Although a judge is normally required to meet with all parties in a case and not with just one, there are circumstances where this rule does not apply and the judge is allowed to meet with just one side (ex parte) such as when a plaintiff requests an order (e.g., to extend time for service of a summons) or dismissal before the answer or appearance of the defendant(s). In addition, sometimes judges will issue temporary orders ex parte (i.e., based on one party's request without hearing from the other side) when time is limited or it would do no apparent good to hear the other side of the dispute. For example, if a wife claims domestic violence, a court may immediately issue an ex parte order telling her husband to stay away. Once he's out of the house, the court holds a hearing, where he can tell his side and the court can decide whether the ex parte order should be made permanent.

Expert Witness

A person who testifies at a trial because he/she has special knowledge in a particular field that might be helpful to a judge (or jury). This person is

permitted to state his/her opinion concerning those technical matters even though he/she was not present at the event. Non-expert witnesses are permitted to testify only about facts they observed and not their opinions about these facts. An example of an expert witness is a child psychologist or development specialist who testifies about the best interest of the child when custody or visitation is in dispute.

Failure to Thrive Syndrome (FTT)

A serious medical condition most often seen in children under one year. An FTT child's height, weight, and motor development fall significantly below the average growth rate of normal children. It is presumed that this failure to thrive is a result of inadequate nurturing, bonding, and attachment.

Family Preservation Services

Intensive, short-term service delivery programs that provide family therapy and skills education/training and help families obtain basic services, such as food and housing, to prevent removal of the children from the home and keep the family together.

Family Risk Assessment

A written evaluation, often in a checklist format, completed after an investigative report is substantiated and at various other times throughout the case. This assessment is completed to determine the present risk to the child of remaining with or being returned to his/her family.

Felony

One of several grave crimes, such as murder, rape, or burglary, punishable by a more stringent sentence than that given for a misdemeanor. An offense punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of more than one year.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)

A condition in infants resulting from heavy alcohol consumption by the mother during pregnancy. Because alcohol easily crosses the placenta, its concentration in fetal blood equals that in maternal blood. Heavy alcohol intake during pregnancy is associated with numerous adverse effects on the fetus, including mental disability, hyperactivity, irritability, growth deficiencies, poor suck reflex in infants, and behavioral and learning disabilities. Children with FAS often have distinctive facial characteristics, such as small eyes, short noses, a flat, long upper lip area, and flattened mid-face. Following birth, the

infant may suffer from alcohol withdrawal. A similar, but less severe manifestation is called fetal alcohol effect (FAE).

Fine Motor Function

Primarily eye-hand coordination—the ability to receive and utilize signals from your eyes to perform tasks employing the fingers (e.g., tying shoelaces, playing electronic games, or building a model). A component of neuromotor functioning.

Foster Care

A form of substitute care, usually in a home licensed by a public agency, for children whose welfare and protection requires that they be removed from their own homes.

Fracture

A broken bone. One of the most common injuries suffered by battered children.

Gross Motor Function

The ability to facilitate and monitor feedback from the body's large muscles (e.g., during athletic activities). A facet of neuromotor functioning. Also called "large motor function."

Group Home

Residential placement in a non-family living arrangement for children with special needs.

Guardian ad Litem (GAL)

From Latin meaning "guardian at law." The person appointed by the court to look out for the best interest of the child during the course of legal proceedings. In some jurisdictions, this advocate is an attorney; in others, the GAL is a volunteer.

Hearsay

Secondhand information that a witness heard about from someone else and did not see or hear directly. Hearsay is not admitted in court because it is not trustworthy, and because of various constitutional principles, such as the right to confront one's accusers; however, there are so many exceptions that hearsay is more often admitted than excluded.

Hematoma

A swelling caused by a collection of blood in an enclosed space, such as under the skin or the skull.

Homophobia

Irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

IEP (Individualized Education Program)

A written, legal document mandated by federal law to be developed for all students identified as needing special education services. It is developed in a team meeting in which parents, teachers, specialists, and the student, if appropriate, participate. The main goal of the IEP meeting is to discuss and review the educational needs of the student and write a program that identifies goals and objectives for the year.

Immunity, Legal

Legal protection from civil or criminal liability. Some states have reporting statutes that confer qualified immunity upon persons mandated to report, if the report was made in good faith, giving them a defense against libel, slander, invasion of privacy, false arrest, and other lawsuits that the accused person might file.

Impetigo

A highly contagious, rapidly spreading skin disorder that occurs mainly in infants and young children. The disease, characterized by red blisters, may be an indicator of neglect or poor living conditions.

In Camera

Latin term meaning, literally, “in chambers.” A hearing or judicial proceeding conducted in a judge’s chambers or a private place where the public is not present.

In Loco Parentis

Latin term meaning a person, other than parents or legal guardian, who has assumed the status and obligation of a parent without being awarded the legal custody of a juvenile by the court. This term is often used to refer to the court itself taking over what should be parental responsibilities.

Incest

A sexual act between two persons who are related. Includes descent by blood or adoption, stepchild (while marriage creating their relationship still exists), brother, half-brother, sister, half-sister, niece, and nephew. Incest may occur between members of the same sex, but the most common form of incest is between father and daughter.

Indian Child

Any unmarried person who is under age 18 and either (a) is a member of an Indian tribe or (b) is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and is the biological child of a member of an Indian tribe. (Note: There is another definition in the service provisions that is wider and may give a child the opportunity to access services. This can be important where a child can be enrolled because of failure to meet a residency requirement of a specific tribe but could access culturally relevant services. The third definition is in the notice section of ICWA, which requires that a tribe be notified whenever the court knows or has reason to know the child may be an Indian.)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 94-142)

A federal law passed in 1975 and reauthorized in 1990 mandating that all children receive a free, appropriate public education regardless of the level or severity of their disability. It provides funds to assist states in the education of students with disabilities and requires that states make sure that these students receive an individualized education program (IEP) based on their unique needs in the least restrictive environment possible. All children ages 3 through 21 who need special education and related services because of a disabling condition are eligible.

Institutional Racism

Bias within an institution or a system that leads to disproportionately negative outcomes for people of a certain race or ethnicity.

Intellectual Disability

A disorder characterized by deficits in general mental abilities, such as reasoning, abstract thinking, and learning, and deficits in adaptive functioning that limit the ability for some activities of daily life and for independent living.

Interstate Compact

Agreement between all 50 states and the District of Columbia that has been passed as law by the states and been approved by Congress, governing out-of-state placements of children. It defines financial and supervisory responsibilities and guarantees consti-

tutional protections. It requires that a court secure a home study from the local child welfare agency in any out-of-state jurisdiction where placement is being considered.

Jurisdiction

The legal authority and power of the court to hear particular types of cases.

Juvenile

Any person who has not reached age 18 and is not married, emancipated, or a member of the armed services of the United States.

Kinship Care

Kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural values and ties of affection. It allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment.

Laceration

A jagged cut or wound.

Leading Question

A question that suggests an answer or puts words in the mouth of a witness. Allowable only when directed to the opposing party in a lawsuit or to an “adverse witness” during cross-examination. Often a leading question will begin, “Isn’t it true that . . . ?”

Least Restrictive Alternative

The principle that supports family autonomy, with in-home services provided by the child welfare agency only where necessary and then in the form that least intrudes on family autonomy. Consideration of placement outside the home should start at the least restrictive level: other family members, foster home, and then institutional placement, as most restrictive.

Legal Risk Placement

The placing of a child who is not yet legally free for adoption (but likely to be at some future time) with a family who agrees to serve as a foster placement for the time being and an adoptive family should that possibility occur.

Lesion

Any injury to any part of the body from any cause that results in damage or loss of structure or function of the body tissue. A lesion may be caused by poison, infection, dysfunction, or violence, and may be accidental or intentional.

Malnutrition

Failure to receive adequate nourishment. Often exhibited in neglected children, malnutrition may be caused by inadequate diet (either lack of food or insufficient amounts of needed vitamins) or by a disease or other abnormal condition affecting the body's ability to properly process foods.

Medicaid

A government-sponsored health insurance program that provides care based on financial need.

Medically Fragile

A number of subgroups make up medically fragile infants and children, including infants weighing less than 1,500 grams at birth; infants, children, and teens who become medically fragile because of an illness after birth (e.g., lupus, renal disease); infants, children, and teens who sustain serious injuries or child abuse; infants born with multiple defects involving malformations in a number of organ systems (e.g., Down's syndrome); and infants born addicted to alcohol or drugs because of the mother's substance abuse during pregnancy.

Mongolian Spots

A birthmark that can appear anywhere on a child's body, most frequently on the lower back. These dark spots usually fade by age 5. They may be mistaken for bruises and are found primarily on children of color.

Motion for Review

A legal action filed by any party in a court proceeding requesting the court to hear evidence on the current status of the child.

Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSP)

A form of child abuse in which the parent/caretaker relates fictitious illnesses in his/her child by either inducing or fabricating the signs or symptoms. As

a result, the child is subjected to extensive medical tests and hospitalizations. The technical definition of MSP includes: (1) an illness in a child that is faked and/or produced by a parent or caretaker; (2) a parent or parent figure who presents the child for medical care persistently, often resulting in multiple medical procedures; (3) denial of the knowledge by the perpetrator as to the etiology of the illness; and (4) acute symptoms, which abate when the child is separated from the parent/caretaker.

Neglected Juvenile

Defined by state statutes. Usually arises from a parent's passive indifference to a child's well-being, such as failing to feed a child or leaving a child alone for an extended time.

Neurosis

A relatively mild mental illness involving symptoms of stress (depression, anxiety, obsessive behavior, hypochondria) but not a radical loss of touch with reality.

Non-Respondent Parent

Parent not involved in the court case.

Notice

Receipt of the petition by the parents, the CASA/GAL volunteer, or other parties to the case, which gives them fair warning of specific allegations sufficiently in advance of court proceedings so that reasonable opportunity to prepare will be afforded.

Objection

A lawyer's protest about the legal propriety of a question.

Oppositional Behavior

A tendency to be defiant and noncompliant. When there is an enduring pattern of irritable mood, defiant behavior, and vindictiveness, the person may be diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder. Harsh, inconsistent, or neglectful childrearing practices are common in families with children with this diagnosis.

Order

In legal practice, an order is a written directive of a court judge.

Overrule

A judge's rejection of an attorney's objection to a question to a witness (i.e., the question is legally proper). By overruling the objection, the trial judge allows the question to be answered or the evidence to be considered.

Parens Patria

Latin term meaning "the power of the sovereign." Refers to the state's power to act for or on behalf of incompetents, such as minors or some developmentally disabled persons.

Party

A person making or responding to a claim in a court or other adversarial proceeding. A person who sues or defends a lawsuit or any person joined in a lawsuit, such as a pension plan administrator, is called a party. A party has the right to conduct discovery and receive notice of all proceedings connected with the lawsuit.

Paternalism

A system under which an authority undertakes to supply needs or regulate conduct of those under its control in matters affecting them as individuals as well as in their relations to authority and each other.

Perception

The process by which sensory stimulation is converted into organized experiences. What appears to you; what you believe to be true.

Permanency Planning Hearing

A hearing that takes place one year after the child is removed from the home or 30 days after a judge orders reasonable efforts have been made. This hearing is designed to look at the child's placement options, amount of time in care, the current plan, and further resources for the child.

Petition

A civil pleading filed to initiate a matter in juvenile court, setting forth specifically the alleged grounds for the court to take jurisdiction of the case and asking the court to do so and intervene.

Petitioner

The individual who initiates court action, whether by filing a petition or a motion for review alleging the matter for adjudication. For child abuse, neglect, or dependency cases,

the petitioner is generally the child protection agency caseworker acting on behalf of the agency.

Physical Abuse

Intentional harming of a child, use of excessive force, reckless endangerment.

Plaintiff

The person who initiates a lawsuit by filing a complaint. When the document that initiates a lawsuit is called a petition rather than a complaint, the initiating person is usually referred to as the petitioner rather than the plaintiff.

Prejudice

Preconceived judgment or opinion.

Prima Facie

Latin term approximately meaning “on the first appearance” or “on the face of it.” In law, this term is used in the context of a prima facie case, in which the presentation of evidence at a trial has been sufficiently strong to prove the allegations unless contradicted and overcome by other evidence.

Privileged Communications

Confidential communication that is protected by statutes and need not or cannot be disclosed in court over the objections of the holder of the privilege. Lawyers are almost always able to refuse to disclose what a client has told them in confidence. Priests, ministers, rabbis, doctors, psychotherapists, and spouses are all covered by privilege statutes, but their testimony can be compelled in many cases involving child abuse or neglect.

Probable Cause

A legal standard, used in a number of contexts, that indicates reasonable grounds for suspicion of or belief in the existence of certain facts or allegations.

Probation

In criminal or delinquent cases, a disposition that allows the convicted criminal defendant or the juvenile found to be delinquent to remain at liberty, under a suspended sentence of imprisonment, generally under the supervi-

sion of a probation officer, and usually under certain conditions. Violation of a condition is grounds for revocation of the probation.

Pro Bono

Latin term referring to attorney services rendered at no charge.

Pro Se (or Pro Per)

Latin term meaning to act as one's own legal counsel.

Protective Services Division

The division of the local child protection agency responsible for investigating reports of child abuse, neglect, and dependency, preserving the family life of the parties involved where possible by enhancing parental capacity for good child care, and petitioning to court if necessary services are refused in serious situations.

Psychotic Person

A person who suffers a major mental disorder impairing his/her ability to think, respond emotionally, remember, communicate, interpret reality, or behave appropriately, so as to interfere with his/her capacity to meet the ordinary demands of life. The term "psychotic" is neither very precise nor definite. It is estimated that significantly fewer than 10% of all abusive or neglectful parents are psychotic.

Race

A social construct used to distinguish a population of humans from other populations. Race is a relatively modern idea that has been used to justify social inequalities. It does not have a basis in genetics.

Racism

A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. Also, racial prejudice or discrimination.

Reasonable Efforts

The diligent use of preventive or reunification services by the child protection agency when a juvenile's remaining at home or returning home is consistent with achieving a safe, permanent home for the juvenile within a reasonable period of time. If a court of competent jurisdiction determines that the juve-

nile is not to be returned home, then reasonable efforts means the diligent and timely use of permanency planning services by the child protection agency to develop and implement a permanent plan for the juvenile. It is the judge who determines whether the agency has made “reasonable efforts” to prevent the child’s placement and reunify the family. The two factors central to this determination are the quality of the efforts and the nature of the services offered. Quality of effort refers to a reasonable level of diligence and good judgment and the absence of negligence. Nature of services refers to the availability of services to meet the needs of the child and/or family.

Recant

To withdraw a statement.

Recross-Examination

After redirect or rebuttal is completed, the opposing counsel are permitted to ask the witness questions covering the issues addressed in the redirect or rebuttal examination.

Redirect Examination or Rebuttal

Upon conclusion of all cross-examination, the attorneys are permitted to ask the witness more questions. These questions are called “redirect” or “rebuttal” questions, and they are designed to undo any damage to the attorney’s case resulting from the cross-examination.

Reporting Laws

State laws that require specified persons to notify public authorities of cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. All 50 states now have reporting statutes, but they differ widely in what must be reported, persons who must report, manner of reporting (written, oral, or both), and the degree of immunity conferred upon reporters.

Review Hearing

A hearing conducted by a judge, within certain time frames, to review the status of a child’s case.

Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders

These disorders are characterized by symptoms such as thought disorders, hallucinations, delusions, and decreased emotional expressions. With the help of new medications aided by psychotherapy, schizophrenia can be controlled

so that people with the disorder can maintain employment and live with their families.

Sexual Abuse

Engaging a child in any activity for the adult's own sexual gratification.

Shaken Baby Syndrome

Injury to an infant or baby that results from the child having been shaken, creating a whiplash effect, usually as a misguided form of discipline. It is often accompanied by blunt force trauma to the head. The most common symptom is bleeding inside the head. Repeated instances of shaking can result in mental and developmental disabilities and, in extreme cases, death.

Sickle Cell Anemia

A genetic defect of hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying protein in red blood cells. Sickle cell anemia changes the shape of red blood cells, making them "plug up" small blood vessels and choke off the blood supply to the tissues. During periods of frequent sickle-cell crisis, children and teens can be incapacitated for weeks or months. The children experience severe pain, require frequent hospitalizations, and often require emergency care to obtain oxygen and fluids. Sickle cell anemia occurs in about 160 of each one hundred thousand live African American births.

Skeletal Survey

A series of x-rays that studies all bones of the body. Such a survey should be done in all cases of suspected physical abuse to locate any old, as well as new, fractures.

Social History

Also called social study, social report, or pre-hearing report. Information compiled by a caseworker about a child and/or family's functioning. This material may be presented for the juvenile court's consideration at the disposition hearing. Social histories often contain material that is hearsay.

Stand

The place where the witness sits while testifying. It is usually a chair beside the judge's bench. When called to testify, the witness "takes the stand."

Standard of Proof

In different judicial proceedings there are varying requirements of proof. Three of the most commonly used standards are:

1. **Beyond a Reasonable Doubt:** Evidence that is entirely convincing or satisfying to a moral certainty. This is the strictest standard of all and applies to all criminal proceedings. It is the standard applied to termination of parental rights that come under the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act (PL 95-608).
2. **Clear, Cogent, and Convincing Evidence:** Less evidence than is required to prove a case beyond a reasonable doubt, but still an amount that would make one confident of the truth of the allegations. This is the standard applied to TPR cases (unless ICWA applies).
3. **Preponderance of Evidence:** Merely presenting a greater weight of credible evidence than that presented by the opposing party. This is the lowest standard of proof; used in most civil court proceedings.

Statute

A law passed by the legislature.

Stereotype

Something conforming to a fixed or general pattern, especially a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudice, attitude, or uncritical judgment.

Stipulation

An agreement (oral or written, depending on the jurisdiction and nature of the proceeding) between the attorneys in a case that allows a certain fact to be established in evidence without further proof (e.g., the lawyers in a child abuse case may stipulate that the x-rays show a fracture so that the radiologist will not have to be subpoenaed to testify).

Subdural Hematoma

A common symptom of abused children, consisting of a collection of blood beneath the outermost membrane covering the brain and spinal cord. The hematoma may be caused by a blow to the head or from shaking a baby or small child. See also Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Subpoena

An order of the court for a witness to appear at a particular time and place to testify and/or produce documents in his/her control. A subpoena is used to obtain testimony from a witness at depositions (where testimony under oath is given outside of court) and at trial. Failure to appear as ordered by the subpoena can be punished as contempt of court if it appears the absence was intentional or without cause.

Subpoena Duces Tecum

Subpoena requiring the person subpoenaed to bring records to court.

Substantiation

A decision by the child protection agency to confirm a report of abuse or neglect after an investigation. It is then the agency's responsibility to determine if a petition should be filed or if the situation can be corrected with voluntary acceptance of protective services.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

A sudden, unexpected death of any infant in whom a thorough postmortem examination fails to show a clear cause of death. Recent studies suggest that some infant deaths attributed to SIDS were related to other previously unknown causes.

Summons

A legal document issued by a court clerk or other court officer, usually handed in person by the sheriff to the person summoned, notifying the named person that a lawsuit or legal cause has been filed against or involves him/her, and notifying that person of any dates set for hearings and deadlines for responding to the complaint or petition.

Supervised Visitation

Visits between parent and child that are overseen by another person who is present at all times. Usually, supervised visitation is recommended when there is reason to believe a parent may seek information about the foster placement or influence a child to recant allegations or try to leave the area with the child. Supervision may be provided by the caseworker, a relative who is caring for the child, or another responsible adult.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Monthly financial benefits provided to dependent, disabled children whose families meet financial criteria and to disabled adults who are unable to be competitively employed and who meet income and asset criteria.

Sustain

A judge's agreement with an attorney's objection to a question posed to a witness (i.e., the question is not legally proper). By sustaining the objection, the judge does not allow the question to be answered or the evidence to be considered.

Sworn or Swear

To declare under oath that one will tell the truth (sometimes "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"). Failure to tell the truth and to do so knowingly is the crime of perjury. A witness is given the option of swearing to tell the truth or affirming to tell the truth.

The System

In this context, either the child protective services system or the child protective services system and the court.

TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families)

Assistance payments to families in need (formerly known as AFDC), which are subject to five-year limits.

Temporary Custody

Taking physical custody from the parent and providing personal care and supervision by the state until a court order for emergency custody can be obtained. State law defines how many hours a child may be held in temporary custody without an emergency custody order entered by a judge.

Title IV-D

A 1975 amendment to the Social Security Act. Provides greater assistance to the states in establishing paternity and enforcing child support orders. Also created the Child Support Enforcement program to oversee child support enforcement operations at the state level.

Title IV-E

An amendment to the Social Security Act that created a federally funded program for out-of-home placement of children.

Tolerance

Sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own.

Tourette Syndrome

A disorder that involves repetitive movements or unwanted sounds (tics) that can't be easily controlled. Although there's no cure for Tourette syndrome, treatments are available.

Trauma

An internal or external injury or wound caused by an outside force. Usually trauma means injury by violence, but it may also apply to the wound caused by any surgical procedure. Trauma may be caused accidentally or, as in a case of physical abuse, non-accidentally. Trauma is also a term applied to the psychological discomfort or symptoms resulting from an emotional shock or painful experience.

Tribe

There are 566 federally recognized tribal governments in the United States. The United States recognizes the right of these tribes to self-government and supports their tribal sovereignty and self-determination. These tribes possess the right to form their own government, to enforce laws (both civil and criminal), to tax, to establish membership, to license and regulate activities, to zone, and to exclude persons from tribal territories.

Undisciplined Juvenile

A minor who is regularly truant from school, disobedient beyond parental control, regularly found in places unlawful for a juvenile, or has run away from home. The child has not violated any adult criminal law.

Unsubstantiated

The finding after investigation by child protection agency or law enforcement that no abuse or neglect is occurring.

Unsupervised Visitation

Visitation between a parent and child that does not require the family to stay in one place and be watched by a creditable observer, usually a family member or caseworker.

Venereal Disease

Any disease transmitted by sexual contact. Presence of a venereal disease in a child may indicate that the mother was infected with the disease during pregnancy, or it may be evidence of sexual abuse.

Venue

Juvenile court venue refers to the county or counties in which a lawsuit may be initiated based on such factors as where the parents reside, where the child resides, or where the child is found.

Voir Dire

Latin term meaning “to speak the truth.” The procedure during which lawyers question prospective jurors to determine their biases, if any. Also the procedure in which lawyers examine expert witnesses regarding their qualifications, before the experts are permitted to give opinion testimony.

Voluntary Placement

Act of a parent to relinquish custody of his/her child to a child protection agency.

Waiver

The understanding and voluntary relinquishment of a known right, such as the right to counsel, the right to remain silent during police questioning, or the right to a separate hearing.

Witness

A person who testifies under oath in a legal proceeding.

Xenophobia

A fear of all that is foreign; a fear of strange people or “foreigners.”

Please add your own terms and definitions here:
