



CASA Volunteers



CASA volunteers are advocates for children in foster care, speaking up on their behalf and helping them through what is often a confusing and scary time. With just 10-15 hours a month, CASAs can make a difference in the life of a child.

What does CASA stand for?

CASAs are **Court Appointed Special Advocates**. Once a CASA volunteer accepts a case, they are officially appointed by a Juvenile Court judge, authorizing them to become involved in the child's case and gain access to their records.

What do CASAs do?

CASAs act as fact-finders for the judges, providing them with information that they may never get otherwise. CASAs gather information from Court documents, social workers' files, and educational, medical, and therapy records. They also speak with the child, family members, school officials, health providers, and other professionals involved in the child's life. CASAs use this information, as well as firsthand observations, to advocate for the child in Court and school, and in other aspects of their lives. The CASA's role is to consider what is in the child's best interest and to make sure that each child's individual needs are met.

The children we serve have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Many feel very much alone—until they meet their CASA. CASAs visit with their case children at least once a month. This provides the children with stability and consistency and allows the CASAs to better understand the needs of the children, as well as the children themselves. Some CASAs build and maintain positive, trusting relationships with their case children, much like mentors.

Benefits for CASAs:

- Ongoing support from the Voices for Children staff and fellow CASAs
- Professional experience and personal development through a unique volunteer position that offers networking opportunities and looks great on your résumé
- Planned children's activities to which you can bring your case child, including arts and crafts days, holiday parties, and museum outings
- Exclusive events for CASAs, their families, and friends
- An official Voices for Children t-shirt
- Mileage reimbursement
- The opportunity to make a positive impact in a child's life



How to Become a CASA:



1. Sign up to attend one of our free Information Sessions by completing our online [RSVP Form](#). (Please note: Information Sessions are *not* held at our Meadow Lark office.) Space is limited for each of our sessions; sign up today!
2. [Complete a volunteer application](#). You may submit it prior to attending an Information Session or bring it with you.
3. After we have received your application and you have attended an Information Session, you will be invited to schedule an interview with a Voices for Children staff member. If you meet the [requirements for becoming a CASA](#) and we determine a mutual fit, you will be accepted into the CASA Program.

Once accepted into the CASA Program...

You will attend [Advocate University](#) to learn how to be a successful advocate for a foster child. There is a \$50 registration and materials fee for this comprehensive training. (This fee can be waived, if needed.) Advocate University includes 35 hours of classroom and online training, plus the observation of a Juvenile Dependency Court session where you will meet a judge and observe CASAs in action.

At the mid-point in this training, you will be matched with an Advocacy Supervisor—a Voices for Children staff member who will work closely with you on your assigned case. They will provide information on resources and offer guidance and support throughout your CASA service.

Upon graduation and the required security clearance (including criminal and driving record checks), you will be matched with your case child or children. You will have the opportunity to review their files and discuss the case with your Advocacy Supervisor before accepting the match.

Basic Eligibility Requirements:



- Be at least 21 years of age
- Commit to a minimum 18 months of volunteer service
- Have a valid driver's license
- Clear a criminal background check
- Clear a DMV record check (you cannot have had a DUI conviction in the past five years)
- Be willing to drive to a variety of locations throughout San Diego County
- For the protection of the children, be able to maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries

For More Information:

- Visit our website: www.speakupnow.org
- Register for an Information Session: www.speakupnow.org/information-sessions
- For other questions, please email volunteer@speakupnow.org or call (858) 598-2230

**If you are ready to speak up for a child...If you are ready to help create a future...
If you are ready for the experience of a lifetime...
Be a CASA!**