

***We are guilty of many errors and many
faults, but our worst crime is abandoning
the children, neglecting the fountain of life.***

***Many of the things we need can wait.
The child cannot.***

***Right now is the time bones are being
formed, blood is being made, senses are
being developed.***

***To the child we cannot answer "Tomorrow."
The child's name is "Today."***

***Gabriela Mistral
Nobel Prize-Winning Poet from Chile***

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Court House Addresses

SOUTHWEST JUSTICE CENTER

30755 Auld Lane
Murrieta, CA 92563 if Courtroom S203

Note: There are long lines to enter this court house in the morning.

SOUTHWEST JUSTICE CENTER—JUVENILE COURTHOUSE

30755 Auld Lane
Murrieta, CA 92563 if Courtroom SJ2.

Follow signs to Juvenile Courthouse to the left of the large, main courthouse. Parking is limited.

RIVERSIDE JUVENILE COURT

9991 County Farm Road
Riverside, CA 92503

INDIO COURT—LARSEN CENTER

46200 Oasis Street
Indio, CA 92201 Courtroom 1A.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to training and thank you for your commitment! Our goal is to prepare you for your role as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for children in the foster care system. The goal of Advocate University is to provide program-specific training to promote the knowledge and confidence necessary for you to comfortably begin your advocacy. The requirements to graduate from Advocate University are established by the California Rules of Court and National CASA standards.

MISSING A CLASS

You are permitted one absence. If you are unable to attend a class, please call or e-mail Sharon Morris at SharonM@speakupnow.org or via phone at (951) 534-1043. If a voice or email message is not received before class begins, your absence will be considered unexcused. **Failure to contact the training manager may impact CASA eligibility.**

An excused absence ***must*** be made up by completing a make up assignment. We use your demonstrated commitment to training to measure your future commitment as a volunteer. Please take your training as seriously as you will your case.

RESIGNATION

If you are unable to complete training to decide not to pursue this volunteer opportunity, please email the training manager with the reason for your resignation.

TRAINING MATERIALS

Voices for Children thanks you for your \$50 materials fee, as it helps cover the costs incurred in providing these important materials to you. You can send a check to Voices for Children, P O Box 7219, Riverside, CA, 92513—please mark “Training Fee” on the check, or pay by PayPal <https://www.paypal.me/VoicesforChildrenCA> and please note in the notes section that it is for VFC Riverside County training fees.

Policies and Procedures Manual

This manual is yours to keep and must be read before attending Policies and Procedures training on Thursday, January 26, 2023. Before you will be assigned a case, you will be asked to sign a form stating that you have read and understand the contents of this manual.

TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS

Training Assignment Deadlines

Deadlines for assignment completion are FIRM. Failure to meet the deadlines can be cause for dismissal from the program. Please see pages 12 and 13 for a list of required classes, assignments, and deadlines.

Additional Documents

Please submit the following items in e-mail:

- Copy of your driver license
- Auto insurance declaration (This document must include your first and last name as an insured driver, current dates of coverage, policy number, and liability limits)

Mandated Child Abuse Reporter Training

Prior to the last day of training, please complete the training “Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training” class. You should go to this link: <https://www.mandatedreporterca.com/> Press Register top right of the page, select the first option

Required Assignments:

- ___ Voices for Children Auto Liability form
(In class)
- ___ Auto Insurance Declaration Page
- ___ First Advantage Background Check Form
(In class)
- ___ Copy of drivers license
- ___ DMV Pull Notice form
(In class—applies only if you have a CA driver license)
- ___ Live Scan Fingerprints (DOJ, FBI, CACI)
- ___ CA DMV (History Report)
(if you have a CA Driver License)
- ___ Out-of-state DMV Record
(This applies only if you have lived in another state in the past 10 years and held an active driver license in that state)
- ___ References (3)
- ___ Mid-Interview
- ___ Oath of Confidentiality and Oath of Commitment
(In class)
- ___ Mandated Child Abuse Reporting Training
- ___ Practice Court Report Assignment
- ___ Read Policies and Procedures Manual
- ___ Child Abuse Registry Search Authorization
(This applies if you lived in another state in last 7 years)

REQUIREMENTS and ASSIGNMENTS FOR CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)

In-Person Trainings:

- 1/4 Orientation
- 1/5 Understanding Childhood Trauma
- 1/11 Early Intervention Training
- 1/12 Court Report Writing
- 1/18 Educational Advocacy
- 1/19 Relationship Building
- 1/25 Working with Biological Parents
- 1/26 Implicit Bias and Stereotypes
- 1/26 Policies and Procedures

Online Trainings and Required Completion Date:

- 1/4 Introduction to Voices for Children
- 1/4 An Overview of Child Welfare Services
- 1/4 Dependency Law
- 1/12 Courtroom Procedures and Court Files
- 1/12 Diversity
- 1/12 Advocating for Transitional Age Youth
- 1/26 Advocating for LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care
- 1/26 Domestic Violence
- 1/26 Substance Abuse
- April TBD - Advocate University Graduation

Department of Motor Vehicles Printout

You must obtain a driving history from the appropriate state Department of Motor Vehicles agency or agencies.

If you have a California-issued driver license, please obtain a printout of your driving history from the California Department of Motor Vehicles. You can get it online from Department of Motor Vehicles website at this link: <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/online/dr/welcome> The fee is \$2.

Please also obtain your driver record from all other states in which you have lived *and* held an active driver license in the past 10 years.

If your driver license was issued in a state other than California, you need only obtain a driving history from the state (s) in which you previously resided in the past 10 years. Unlike those for California, out-of-state records do not need to be certified and may be obtained online. Please notify the training manager via email if/when you have requested out-of-state records.

You must currently have a valid driver license.

As a CASA, you must commit to driving anywhere in Riverside County to see your child once per month.



Auto Liability Coverage

- ◆ Please complete and submit the VFC Auto Liability form.

Fingerprinting

Volunteers working with children must be fingerprinted through Live Scan and cleared by the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the California Child Abuse Central Index (CACI).

Please take the “Request for Live Scan Service” form to a local police station or UPS to be completed—you will likely need to make an appointment. Bring back the form afterwards for our records.

You will only be notified if your prints have been rejected.

Child Abuse Registry Search

If in the past 7 years you have lived in a state other than California, we are required to check, where permissible by law, with the child abuse registries or child protective service agencies in those states. If you did not disclose your history or residence in your CASA application, please let the training manager know as quickly as possible.

Social Security Verification

Voices for Children asks you to submit to an online background check for primary purpose of Social Security verification. This is done through a third party, First Advantage, via a secure website. Please complete the form authorizing Voices for Children to request this background check, which also screens for felonies and misdemeanors.

Cell Phone Etiquette

Please turn your phone off or on silent. Do not call or text during the training. If you need to make a phone call or send a text, please step outside of the training room.

Educational Advocacy: Many foster children are in need of educational guidance. Learn what an individualized educational program (IEP) is and how you can advocate for your child’s educational rights.

Instructor: Marsha Carey, Asst. Program Manager

Relationship Building: You will learn how to professionally relate to social services practitioners, foster parents, group home staff, and your child. Learn how to resolve conflict, gather information rather than give it, and develop a relationship with your child.

Instructor: Nicole Boettger, Advocacy Supervisor

Working with Biological Parents: Learn about the rights and responsibilities of parents in the dependency system. Observe visitations between parents and their children and learn how to describe those observations in a Court Report.

Instructor: Sharon Morris, Director of Programs

Implicit Bias and the Foster Care System: Learn how stereotypes and biases can negatively affect outcomes for families in the foster care system and how CASAs can work alongside child welfare partners to mitigate the harm they can cause.

Instructor: Sharon Morris, Director of Programs

Policies and Procedures: We have many policies and it is important that you know them for your protection. Study the Policies and Procedures manual before attending this fun and exciting class.

Instructor: Sharon Morris, Director of Programs

In-Person Class Descriptions

Orientation: Learn about the requirements to successfully complete and graduate from Advocate University. You will receive the materials for training in this session, including your assignment folder and the Policies and Procedures manual.

Instructor: Sharon Morris, Director of Programs

Understanding Childhood Trauma: Learn what affects a child's emotional, educational, social, and physical growth and what happens to children who move frequently. Become educated about the types of placements in the foster care system.

Instructor: Melanie Thomas, Advocacy Supervisor

Early Intervention & Services Training: The goals of early intervention are: to be involved/advocate for child's needs as soon as possible to increase permanent outcomes for the child (reunification, adoption); to aim to reduce the number of children who end up in long-term foster care; and to ensure that they do not re-enter foster care after going home to their parents or being adopted. This training will cover the dependency process, and, specifically, getting assigned to a case pre-jurisdiction and advocating for infants and toddlers.

Instructors: Alfred Williams, Advocacy Supervisor

CASA Court Report Writing: After reviewing the mock case file this training will provide you with the opportunity to receive guidance on the final assignment.

The assignment will be *due on Thursday, January 26, 2023.*

Instructor Tiffany Escorcia, Advocacy Supervisor.

Employer Match

Voices for Children depends on the generosity of individuals and businesses in our community for funding. Employers will sometimes match the charitable contributions of their employees and/or their employees' volunteer hours with a donation. We would appreciate you asking your employer about their matching process.

Personal References

Please ask three references to complete the reference questionnaire provided to you. References may not reside in your household, be related to you by blood or marriage, or be considered your significant other. You must have known the person at least a year.

Court Observation/Oath of Confidentiality/Oath of Commitment:

Court Observation is on hold at this time. To meet this training requirement, you will be asked to complete an assignment at your final interview, that includes watching a set of videos that simulate dependency hearings.



Practice Court Report

After attending the in-person Court Report Writing training, you will prepare a court report using the template sent to you after the Court Report Writing class. The assignment will be based on the child in the mock case file you will receive in class.

Due: Thursday, January 26, 2023. Please email your report as an attachment to SharonM@speakupnow.org. You will re-view the report in your final interview with your advocacy supervisor.

Mindflash Trainings

Nine trainings will be completed through Mindflash, an online system. Each class takes about 30-60 minutes to complete. The courses will include a PowerPoint and quizzes; some courses will also have videos to view. **Please save each handout to your computer so that you can refer to it later, as you will lose access to the courses upon completing Advocate University.**

You have the ability to ask the training manager questions while completing the training. There is an icon at the bottom of the screen where you can type a question and an email with a screen shot will be sent to the training manager. If you prefer to have your questions answered in person, please make a list while completing the trainings and we will allow time for questions at the beginning and end of each class. The training manager will also be available before and after each training.

Upon your completion of each online course, the training manager will automatically be sent an email to confirm the training was completed. We will keep this for our records. You will also receive a certificate of completion; this is for your records.

Advocating for Transitional Age Youth: Learn how to help your case child prepare as they transition out of the foster care system and become adults.

Advocating for LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care: The goal of this training is to create an understanding of the issues faced by LGBTQ youth in foster care so CASAs can effectively advocate for their right to appropriate and equitable care.

Domestic Violence: This class explores the issues surrounding families struggling with domestic violence.

Substance Abuse: This class defines substance abuse, its effects on parenting, signs and symptoms to look for in a child, and how a CASA can advocate for the child and family.

SNACKS

Please feel free to bring your meal to class. We have coffee, tea, water, cups, plates, silverware, and napkins for your use. On Saturdays, VFC will also provide lunch.

We encourage you to bring a snack to share with the class at least once during the course of your training. This provides a welcome break and also promotes camaraderie between trainees. A snack sign-up sheet is located on the sign-in table.

Mindflash/Trackstar Class Descriptions

Introduction to Voices for Children: This class provides an overview of our agency's internal functions, how we are funded, the policies and procedures CASAs must adhere to, and our affiliation with the National CASA Association.

An Overview of Child Welfare Services: This class provides an overview of the Department of Public Social Services , types of abuse, the removal process, types of cases, and ways a CASA can help their case child.

Dependency Law: This class leads you through the court process, detailing each phase, a description of the Welfare and Institutions Codes that are filed upon removal of the child, and types of hearings.

Courtroom Procedures and Court Files: Learn appropriate courtroom procedures and what to do when you attend hearings. This class provides instruction on how to interpret case files.

Diversity: This class emphasizes the importance of developing cultural competence, provides guidance on working with diverse children and families, and explores the issue of disproportionality in the foster care system.

Mid-Training Interview

You will receive a letter from the training manager letting you know a member of staff will reach out to schedule your mid interview with you. Some will be on the phone and some on Zoom —these are randomly selected.

You will be assigned your supervisor at the end of training once we have selected your case for you.

Final Interview

All of your training and assignments must be completed before attending your final interview. During this meeting you will review your mock court report and sign the necessary documents to conclude your training. You will also be presented with the short read out for your case.

Graduation

You are invited to attend graduation upon completion of your training requirements. A Riverside County Juvenile Court judge will swear you in as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. A formal invitation will be sent via email about one week prior to this special occasion.

We encourage the attendance of family and friends.

Note: If all assignments, clearances, and your final interview have been completed and the matching team has identified a match, you do not have to wait until graduation to be assigned to your case.