



**CASA**  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**  
VIRGINIA BEACH

*Presented to*  
**JDR Best Practice Court**  
**Virginia Beach Bar Association**

 **CASA**  
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July 22, 2016


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## **History of The CASA Program**

**Originated in Seattle, Washington by J&DRC Judge**

- Social workers were overwhelmed with the number of abuse and neglect cases
- Judge wanted to know more about the children in order to make appropriate decisions
- Judge recruited a group of friends to serve as his "eyes and ears" outside of the court
- Program was deemed as a best practice and other states adopted the concept

**TODAY → 900+ CASA Programs Nationwide**

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## National CASA

National CASA (NCASAA) is a member association which supports and promotes CASA advocacy so that every child victim of abuse and neglect can have a safe permanent.

### NCASAA provides:

- Training and Curriculum
- Technical Assistance and Quality Assurance
- Volunteer Recruitment and Public Awareness
- Resource Development and Grants

**Virginia Beach CASA is an accredited member of NCASAA**



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## Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)

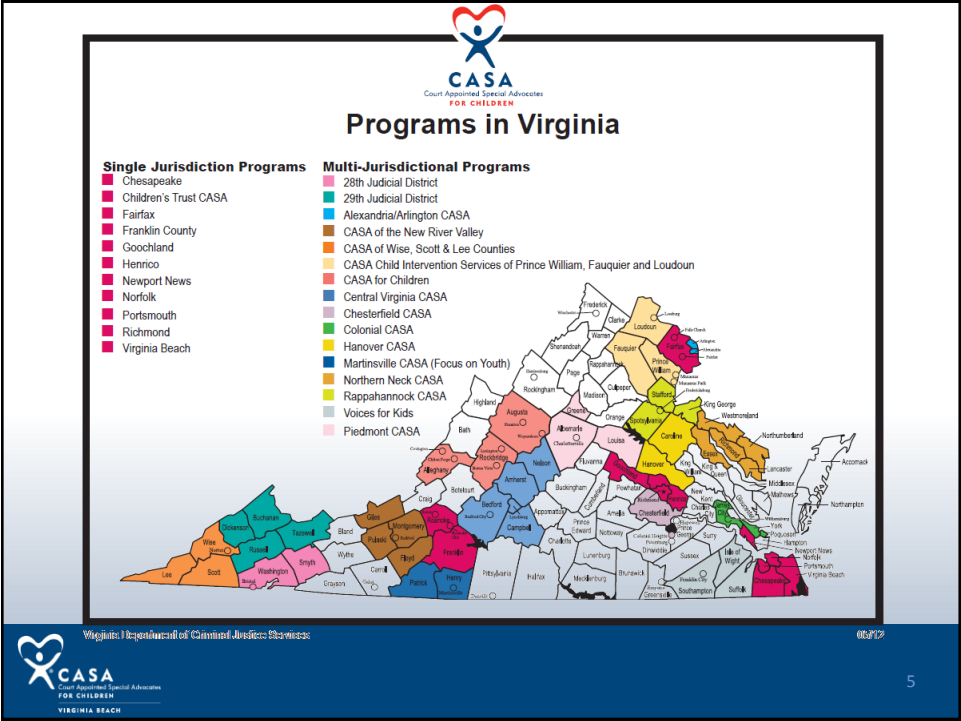
DCJS is the regulatory agency that oversees the 27 CASA programs across the State of Virginia

### DCJS responsibilities:

- Provide oversight for CASA Programs statewide
- Adopt Regulations
- Manage the Advisory Committee
- Administer state appropriation grant funding



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# What Do CASA Volunteers DO?

**Per the Code of Virginia,  
there are 5 Duties  
of a CASA Volunteer**



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## 5 Duties of a CASA Volunteer

### #1

Investigate the case to which assigned to provide independent factual information to the court.



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## 5 Duties of a CASA Volunteer

### #2

Submit to the court a written report of the investigation in compliance with the provisions of § [16.1-274](#). The report may, upon request of the court, include recommendations as to the child's welfare, including:

- Where the child should reside
- Visitation with the parents
- Treatment plan for the parents
- Treatment plan for the child

## 5 Duties of a CASA Volunteer

### #3

Monitor the case to which they are assigned to ensure compliance with the court's orders.

## 5 Duties of a CASA Volunteer

### #4

Assist any appointed Guardian *Ad Litem* to represent the child in providing effective representation of the child's needs and best interests.

## 5 Duties of a CASA Volunteer

### #5

Report a suspected abused or neglected child  
(mandated reporters)

## Roles and Responsibilities of CASA Volunteers

Provide information to the court regarding the child's best interests.

Submit a report to the court which may include recommendations.

Advocate for the child and remain consistent during the complex legal process.



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## Roles and Responsibilities of CASA Volunteers

Explains the roles of judges, lawyers, and social workers to the child.

Assists the Guardian *Ad Litem* appointed to the case.



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## CASA Volunteers **DO NOT**

- Investigate allegations of abuse
- Provide direct services (transportation, counseling, shelter, etc.)
- Provide legal representation during the case.
- Represent the child's **wishes** in court.
- Replace a social worker.



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## CASA Volunteers and GALs

The CASA volunteer and GAL have the opportunity to work the most collaboratively in the Virginia model.

**BUT**

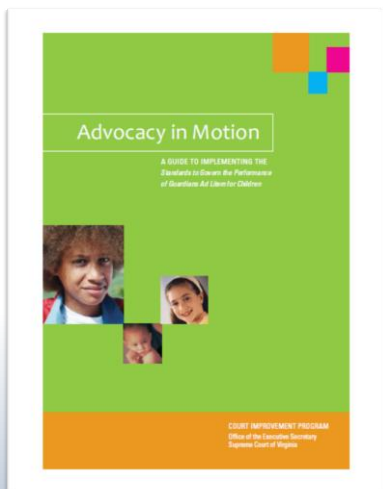
The CASA Volunteer and GAL are also independent and can maintain that independence if need be.



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## CASA Volunteers and GALs



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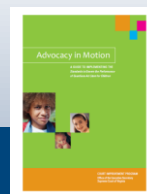
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## CASA Volunteers and GALs

Per "Advocacy In Motion:"

- GALs are encouraged to contact the CASA volunteer and coordinate all aspects of the investigation with him/her.
- CASA Volunteers can offer significant information and assistance to the GAL, such as interviewing hard-to-reach witnesses.
- CASA may also be able to supplement information gathered by the GAL. Meeting the child with the CASA may also be appropriate.

Source: pg. 18 - Court Improvement Program  
Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of Virginia.



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## CASA Volunteers and GALs

- CASA Volunteers work jointly and cooperatively with GALs.
- CASA Volunteers work at the pleasure of the Judge, but can work in collaboration with the GAL.

Source: pg. 35 - Court Improvement Program  
Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of Virginia.



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## CASA Volunteer Training and Qualifications

CASA volunteers must pass rigorous background checks and meet stringent screening requirements.

Training requirements include 30 pre-service hours and 12 annual in-service hours.

Upon completion of training, sworn in to serve under oath by the chief JDRC judge



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## CASA Partnerships

- Guardian Ad Litem – codified relationship
- Department of Social Services
- Court personnel
- System professionals involved in each case
- Funding agencies/organizations



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## CASA Works in Virginia!

### FY13 Outcomes

*Virginia CASA programs produce effective outcomes for children*

- 97% of CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted by the court and are reflected in court orders and service plans
- Upon case closure, in 81% of the cases the CASA volunteer determined the child was placed in a safe/permanent home



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## Proven Results

### Per National CASA Statistics

A child with a CASA volunteer is:

- 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
- Ordered more services while in the system
- More likely to pass all courses
- Less likely to bounce from home to home
- Less likely to have poor conduct in school
- Less likely to be expelled



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## Find Your Local CASA Program

GALs can request a that CASA Volunteer be assigned to cases of abuse and neglect.

To see if the localities where you serve has a CASA program visit:

<http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/juvenile/casa/>



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