

CASA VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW WITH PARENT(S)

Please see attached to prepare for your first meeting with the parents.

Prior to scheduling an interview with the parent(s), inform the attorney for the parent of your intentions to meet with his/her client. In the initial discussion with the parent, explain that the CASA volunteer does not work for DHS and is in a neutral, objective role. Acknowledge how difficult the situation is for the parent as well as the child/children.

Name of Parent:	Date & Time:
Place of Interview:	CASA Volunteer:
Case Name:	Case Number:

1. The parent provided the following general information about the child/children:

2. The parent provided the following specific information about the child/children:

- School performance concerns:
- Medical/dental treatment needs:
- Special needs:
- Other concerns:

3. Information about the history of this family includes:

4. Events leading to DHS involvement include:

5. Services provided by DHS to the family include:

6. Services the parent believes would be helpful are:

7. The parent's goals include:

8. Tribal affiliation, and tribal services:

9. Other:

CASA's Initial Meeting with Parents

Positive and Professional Communication to Ensure Effective Advocacy and Permanency for Children

Summary. The purpose of the parent meeting, which lasts approximately 30 – 45 minutes, is to introduce yourself as the CASA and gather information about their children.

At the initial parent meeting, let the parent know the judge has assigned you as an independent volunteer advocate for their child. Your main role is to be the voice of the child ensuring the judge knows the child's wishes. You also visit with the child in the foster home and make recommendations to the judge about the child's safety, education, health and wellbeing. "You know your children better than anyone else. What can you share with me about your children that will ensure their needs are being met?"

The purpose of the meeting is not to interview or interrogate a parent about their history. You should, however, ask the parent what services they are currently engaged in and how they think they are doing. Research shows that when a child is assigned a CASA, both the children and parents receive more services and children spend less time in foster care. We should also ask a parent if there are any additional services they need; e.g., assistance with employment, housing, utilities, etc.

We want families to succeed. CASA values children's attachment to their parents. The initial plan is to work toward reunification. Tell the parent that in addition to relaying the child's wishes and needs, you would also like to report to the judge how the parent is doing. Ask if they can sign a Release so you can contact their service providers. If they do not want to sign the Release, it is okay. Simply make a note in the CASA court report that the parent did not want to sign a Release to monitor services.

CASA's communication with a parent is based on relationship building.

- Focus on strengths more than weaknesses
- Engender hope
- Use some self-disclosure of commonalities
- Demonstrate warmth and emphasize positive motivation
- Communicate the attitude that the family's problem is of real importance
- Convey sensitivity to the family's feelings through voice tone and body language
- Match the person's pace of speech
- Validate the person's experience and perception of an event
- Attempt to engage and improve self-esteem by making positive comments
- Be sensitive to pace set by family members in working on problems, while placing the needs of the child first and focusing on permanency and safety
- Demonstrate awareness of cultural strengths and differences
- Facilitate empowerment by doing with, not for, focusing on person's own dreams and goals.