

## **The CASA Volunteer's Relationship with the Child**

Establishing a relationship with the child is one of the most important things you do as a CASA volunteer. The ideal relationship is one that maximizes your ability to advocate successfully for the child. The following guidelines describe the parameters for your relationship and contacts with the child:

As a CASA volunteer, you have direct and sufficient contact with a child to carry out an independent and valid investigation of the child's circumstances, including the child's needs and wishes, so as to be able to make sound, thorough, and objective recommendations in the child's best interest. This contact should occur in person to provide you with firsthand knowledge of the child and his/her unique personality, abilities, and needs.

While social contact is permitted with the child to develop trust and a meaningful relationship, you function as an objective advocate for the child and not as the child's attorney, caseworker, counselor, mentor, or parental figure. You do not provide direct services to the child, such as supervising visitation; however, it is appropriate for you to observe visitation.

Under no circumstances shall you take the child into your home, provide shelter for the child, or take the child on an overnight outing.

Please also see *Engaging Children in Conversation*.

Volunteer Training Curriculum, National CASA Association