

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF THE PEOPLE
INVOLVED IN A CPS CASE

GUARDIAN AD LITEM

WHO IS THE CASA/GAL AND THEIR SUPERVISOR?

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CASA/GAL Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

CASA/GAL Supervisor Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

WHAT IS A GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL)?

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A guardian ad litem (GAL) can be a volunteer or an attorney. The role of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer or GAL is to get to know the child and their family so that they can tell the judge what they think is best for the child in the case. The CASA/GAL is independent from the lawyers and caseworkers who are involved in the case.

WHAT DOES THE CASA/GAL DO?

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The CASA/GAL talks to the child, their parents, other family members, and anyone else that knows the child, like their teacher, coach, neighbor, or family friend, to learn about the family and the case. Before each hearing, the CASA/GAL files a written report with the court to tell the judge and everyone in the case how the child is doing, what they have learned, and what they think is best for the child.

If the GAL is a CASA volunteer, they have special training to make recommendations to a judge about what they think is in the best interest of each child.

THE CASA/GAL MUST:

- See and talk to the child regularly.
- Meet with the child's parents regularly, when possible.
- Tell the judge how the child is doing and what they need.
- Meet with the adults the child lives with and talk with them about how the child is doing.
- Talk with teachers and therapists to make sure the child is getting the support they need.
- Talk with the caseworker and the lawyers in the case regularly.

THE CASA/GAL CANNOT:

- Give legal advice (that's the lawyer's job).
- Provide counseling (that's the therapist's job).
- Do things that are unsafe for the child or that make them feel uncomfortable.
- Keep any secrets from the judge.
- Treat people differently because of what they look like, or other reasons that are unfair.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE CASA/GAL?

If you are concerned that the CASA volunteer is not doing a good job on your case, you can try to talk to the volunteer about your problem. If that does not work, you can talk to their supervisor. If you don't know who to call, you can find contact information for your local CASA program at <https://texascasa.org/who-we-are/local-casa/>.

If the guardian ad litem is an attorney and not a CASA volunteer, you can make a complaint to the State Bar of Texas. The State Bar of Texas is in charge of making sure lawyers help their clients. If you want to complain about something your attorney guardian ad litem is doing or not doing, you can contact the State Bar at 1-800-932-1900.

