

## Duties of a Guardian ad Litem Volunteer

1. Conduct an independent investigation by reviewing all pertinent documents and records and interviewing the child, parents, social workers, foster parents, teachers, therapists, daycare providers and other relevant persons to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation. To do this effectively, volunteers spend considerable time getting to know children and gaining their trust.
2. Determine the thoughts and feelings of the child about the situation, taking into account the child's age, maturity, culture and ethnicity and degree of attachment to family members, including siblings. Also to be considered are continuity, consistency and a sense of belonging and identity.
3. Seek cooperative solutions by acting as a facilitator among conflicting parties to achieve resolution of problems and to foster positive steps toward achieving permanence for the child.
4. Provide written reports at every hearing which include findings and recommendations. The report documents the extent of the volunteer's investigation, lists each source of information and includes sufficient facts to justify the recommendations.
5. Appear at all hearings to advocate for the child's best interests and provide testimony when necessary.
6. Explain the court proceedings and the role of the CASA volunteer to the child in terms the child can understand.
7. Make recommendations for specific, appropriate services for the child and the child's family and advocate for necessary services which may not be immediately available.
8. Monitor implementation of case plans and court orders, checking to see that court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner and that review hearings are held in accordance with the law.
9. Inform the court promptly of important developments including any agency's failure to provide services or the family's failure to participate. The CASA volunteer should ensure that appropriate motions are filed on behalf of the child in order that the court can be made aware of the changes in the child's circumstances and can take appropriate actions.
10. Advocate for the child's interests in the community by bringing concerns regarding the child's health, education and mental health, etc. to the appropriate professionals to assure that the child's needs in these areas are met.