

CASA Handbook



CHILD AND FAMILY
ADVOCATES
of Cuyahoga County

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This program is supported by Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court and Ohio CASA. Ohio CASA supports local CASA/GAL programs throughout the state with training, technical assistance, legislative support, and standards implementation, so volunteers may advocate for abused, neglected, and dependent children in the Court system. This program is also supported by grant number, 2019-VOCA-132131098, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Victims of crime will be served.

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Welcome Statement

February, 2016

Dear CASA Volunteer,

Thank you so much for volunteering with CASA of Cuyahoga County.

The mission of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Cuyahoga County is to provide qualified, trained, and supervised community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused, neglected, and dependent children involved in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, in collaboration with key agencies and significant individuals in their lives.

CASAs provide essential objective information that allows the Court to make just and fair decisions. Families involved in the Juvenile Court and child welfare system are involved in critical life-changing circumstances. You are advocates for these vulnerable children and their families. This is not an easy task, and requires training, determination, and integrity. Without dedicated and passionate volunteers like you, CASA would not exist.

Again, thank you for sharing your time, energy, and heart with the Juvenile Court and the most vulnerable members of our community.

Sincerely,

Judge Kristin W. Sweeney
Administrative Judge

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A New Agency with a Long History

Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County (CFACC) was formed in 2016 as a not-for-profit organization to join the 38-year old Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Project and Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court's newly established Court Appointed Special Advocates Program (CASA) of Cuyahoga County. CFACC's mission is to make a difference for every child served through advocacy, education, and collaborative alliances. Our vision is that every child is seen, heard, and engaged, leading to permanency and hope. Attorney GALs and CASA volunteers receive training, monitoring, and supervision to represent the best interests of children in the Juvenile Court.

A Team Approach

CFACC approaches child advocacy in a unique way. CASAs and GALs are assigned as partners to advocate for the best interests of children in a family, whether one child or a sibling group. This dual representation model enhances the quality of advocacy provided for children in the Juvenile Court. Both the CASA and GAL bring different skills and a different perspective; however, each has one common goal – providing the highest quality advocacy for the best interests of each child.

Target Population

CASAs are appointed to children in abuse, neglect, and dependency cases on Court Ordered Protective Supervision cases (COPS) and Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA) cases. Assignment of CASAs to other types of cases is based on resource availability.

CASA Handbook

This handbook is meant to provide guidance and direction in executing the CASA role and responsibilities. These guidelines do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The handbook is meant to be used as a reference in conjunction with your training manual. CASA of Cuyahoga County reserves the right to change any of these procedures at any time and to expect adherence to the changes. All substantive changes will be shared. On occasion, certain exceptions may be made to any of the procedures at the discretion of the Program Director. As you proceed with your first assignment, consider whether this document answers your questions. If not, please identify issues, topics or questions that need to be addressed. Your input is appreciated.

Services at the Discretion of CASA of Cuyahoga County

CASA of Cuyahoga County accepts the services of all CASAs with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the program. CASAs agree that the program may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate a CASAs relationship with the program.

Speaking on Behalf of CFACC and CASA of Cuyahoga County

CASAs are encouraged to speak about the program in general throughout the community. The Program Director should be informed of any speaking engagements CASAs may wish to arrange on behalf of the program, so that staff can assist with materials and/or help with the presentation. **All volunteers are prohibited from speaking to the media on behalf of the organization.**

Any ideas that CASAs may have to assist with fundraising efforts are appreciated. CASAs may not initiate fundraising activities on their own on behalf of the organization. This avoids duplication of effort and the possibility of more than one representative approaching the same person or corporation for funding.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Job Description



Basic Function

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a trained community volunteer appointed by the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court to represent the best interests of an abused, neglected, and/or dependent child. CASAs are an official part of the judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys and Child Protection Specialists. By handling only one or two cases at a time, a CASA volunteer has time to thoroughly explore the history and circumstances of each assigned case.

Supervision

Direct supervision and guidance is provided consistently by the staff of CASA of Cuyahoga County. Program staff consults regularly with the CASA to assist with development of a case plan, review progress and reports, and respond to all questions or concerns.

Duties and Responsibilities

The CASA is responsible for investigation, facilitation, advocacy, and monitoring of the assigned child's case of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency so as to represent the child's best interests. Specific requirements are:

- **Contact with the child** – The CASA has regular in-person contact with the child (out of Court) where the child lives, attends school, and participates in community activities, etc., to ensure an in-depth knowledge of the case and makes fact-based recommendations to the Court. **At a minimum, contact the child/parent weekly and meet in-person with the child twice a month for the first six months of the case, then monthly for the remainder of the case.**
- **Investigation** – The CASA conducts an objective examination of the situation, including relevant history, environment, relationships, and needs of the child by reviewing all relevant documents and records; interviewing the child, parents, Child Protection Specialists, teachers, and other appropriate persons; and observing the child in his or her natural environments.
- **Advocacy** – In order to make recommendations regarding the best interests of the child, the CASA appears at all Court hearings, offers testimony when necessary, provides reports, participates in all case conferences, and informs the Court of important developments in the case.
- **Facilitation** – The CASA identifies resources and services for the child and facilitates a collaborative relationship among all parties involved in the case, helping to create a situation in which the child's needs are met.
- **Monitoring** – The CASA remains actively involved until the case is terminated and the child is in a safe and permanent living environment.

Training

Pre-service training consists of independent study, in-class training, and a Court observation for a total of 30 hours. Additionally, the National CASA Association requires that CASAs maintain 12 hours of continuing education each calendar year.

Time Commitment

CASAs are asked to make a two-year commitment and spend, on average, 12 hours a month on each case, and remain on the case until it terminates.

Qualifications

- Be at least 21 years of age
- Have access to transportation, traveling to various locations throughout the community
- Successfully pass screening requirements including a written application, personal interview, references, national, state and local criminal records check, social security verification, sex offender registry check, and a child protective services check
- Able to respect and relate to people of various backgrounds and life styles (cultural, economic, religious, educational, sexual orientation, etc.) in an appropriate manner
- Able to gather and record factual information accurately
- Able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
- Able to maintain objectivity/perspective
- Able to keep information confidential
- Able to work within established program policies and procedures and accept supervision from program staff

Benefits

CASAs make an immeasurable difference in the lives of children. CASAs also experience benefits in their own lives from volunteering:

- Enjoying a sense of purpose and fulfillment
- Increased self-confidence
- Develop and utilize communication skills and other skills
- Utilize life experience and skills
- Develop friendships with other like-minded people in the community
- Access to training statewide

Take a stand ~ Make a difference ~ Change a life ~ Get Involved Today!

Program Policies

Qualifications

CASAs will be recruited on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the involvement of the community. The principle of equal opportunity shall be implemented without regard to race, color, marital status, religion, sex, national origin, age (over 21), disability or genetics. This policy applies in all related actions, including, but not limited to, recruitment, screening, selection, and training. The sole qualification for recruitment will be suitability to perform the duties of the CASA position.

Screening/Background Checks

CASAs must successfully pass all screening and background checks, and training requirements. Any CASA applicant found to have been convicted of or having charges pending for a felony or a misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related acts that would pose a threat to a child or the credibility of the program will not be accepted as a CASA. Background checks will be conducted initially and every four years on all CASAs. Any applicant who has had an indicated or substantiated case within the Ohio Central Registry on Child Abuse and Neglect will not be accepted as a CASA.

Volunteer Records

The program will maintain a file on each volunteer. The file contains, as appropriate:

- Application
- Interview Documentation
- Three References
- Background Check
- Central Registry Letter
- Training Records
- Performance Evaluations
- Signed Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest, and Social Media Statements
- Signed Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability
- Signed Receipt of the CASA Handbook

Reimbursement of Expenses

CASAs are not eligible for reimbursement of any expenses related to their work. CASAs may come to the office to make long distance calls, use office equipment, as needed, such as computers or copier. Mileage, copies and phone call expenses that a CASA incurs may be tax deductible.

Safety

CASAs shall consider their safety and the safety of the child/family, and engage in behaviors that are appropriate and respectful of professional boundaries and their role. No CASA should feel obligated to put him or herself in personal jeopardy as they perform their role. If a CASA is uneasy about entering a neighborhood, building, or meeting with a particular party, they should arrange the meeting in a more comfortable location such as a public place, an office, or coordinate the visit with another party, if possible. CASAs are expected to:

- Visit children in a range of environments
- Be aware of their surroundings
- Communicate any safety concerns with program staff
- **NOT** transport any child, family member or other person on the case they are assigned

At no time shall a CASA enter the home of a child when a parent or legal guardian is not present. This applies even when the child may allow access.

- CASAs shall be aware of an individual's sense of privacy
- At no point should a CASA sit alone in a car or any vehicle with a child
- If a parent is at home, but refuses to allow access, the parent can be told that this shall be reflected in the report to the Court. This statement may be useful in persuading the parent to allow the CASA access to the child.

Maintaining Professionalism

CASAs are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. During the case, frustrating situations may occur with children, families, and other professionals on the case. CASAs shall calmly communicate their interpretation of the facts and avoid argumentative language. If this situation does occur, CASAs should contact their Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

CASAs are responsible for attending **ALL** Court hearings and arriving on time. ***Snacks, gum, and drinks are not permitted in the courtrooms and cell phones should be turned off or on vibrate when you enter the courtroom. There shall be no talking while the Judge and/or Magistrate is on the bench.*** Please refrain from facial expressions while Court is in session, especially while the Judge/Magistrate or any party is speaking.

Dress Attire

When meeting with parents, foster/kinship caregivers, or children, CASAs should wear clothing that is both casual and comfortable. When meeting with professionals involved in the case or attending Court, business casual attire is appropriate. Overall, no tennis shoes, shorts, tank tops, t-shirts, and/or jeans are permitted to be worn during Court hearings. Appropriate courtroom attire includes: business suits; dress shirts; dress pants or slacks; ties; sport coats or jackets; dress shoes or dress sandals with most

of the foot covered, open toe and sling back; dresses or skirts not shorter than two inches above the knee; stockings or pantyhose when wearing dresses or skirts; and blouses and sweaters. Please ensure that you are wearing your CASA ID badge at all Court hearings.

Social Media

CASAs shall sign the Online Communication and Social Media Guidelines annually (Appendix D). CASAs shall not post any information on social media related to the children for whom they are assigned to advocate.

Weapons Policy

To protect a volunteer from inadvertent violation of the firearms and weapons laws, volunteers shall not carry any deadly weapon, firearm and/or dangerous ordnance as defined in Section 2923.11 of the Ohio Revised Code, regardless of whether a volunteer possesses a concealed carry permit or is allowed by law to possess a firearm, while on any property owned, leased or controlled by CFACC and while conducting any duties of a CASA. Volunteers who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the program.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

CFACC seeks to maintain an environment which is free from intimidation, discrimination, coercion or harassment, including sexual harassment. Discrimination against a volunteer or client by another volunteer or staff member of CFACC will not be tolerated. In the event of a question, complaint or allegation regarding harassment or discrimination of any kind, the volunteer should speak with the Program Director. The matter will be investigated in a discreet and confidential manner and after consideration of the facts; appropriate action will be taken in the best interests of the volunteer and the program. Such action may include recommendations for counseling, disciplinary warning, or discharge.

Alcohol/Drugs

CASAs are prohibited from being under the influence of, using, possessing, selling or otherwise being involved with illegal drugs and/or alcohol while engaging in their role as a volunteer. CASAs are expected to notify the program if arrested for an alcohol or drug related offense.

Leave of Absence

CASAs may request to take a leave of absence from their role as a CASA for two (2) years. It is requested that the CASA provide in writing, information regarding the time period of this leave to the program as early as possible. **CASAs are required to maintain twelve hours of continuing education annually while on leave.** Supporting documentation of attendance must be submitted to the program. Please refer to Appendix H for more information. Failure to meet this requirement will result in termination.

After two years of being on a leave of absence, if the CASA is not ready for a case assignment, the CASA will no longer be considered qualified and will be automatically terminated. The individual would be required to complete the application, screening and training process again if interested in serving as a CASA.

Resignation

It is crucial that CASAs maintain continuity on cases. If a CASA, under extreme circumstances (i.e., medical emergency or moving out of state), must resign from their volunteer service, it is requested that volunteers provide as much advance notice as possible and the reason for their decision.

- Prior to resignation, the CASA must communicate their intention with their assigned Volunteer Coordinator.
- Resignations should be made in writing and submitted to the office.
- The CASA should notify ALL parties, including the family and child(ren), involved.
- Ideally, the CASA should have a closure visit with the family and child(ren).
- CASAs are required to return all case materials and their ID badge to the CFACC office.
- The program is responsible for filing a Notice of Resignation with the Court.

Once a CASA has communicated that they wish to resign from the CASA program, it will be requested that a CASA Exit Interview be completed. The interview can be completed in the following ways:

- In person with the Volunteer Coordinator
- By phone with the Volunteer Coordinator
- Via e-mail, using the PDF fillable form
- Via regular mail, sent with a return self-addressed stamped envelope

The CASA Exit Interview is an opportunity to understand the CASA's request to resign from the program. This is a voluntary interview and the information provided will remain confidential and used only to enhance the CASA program.

Complaints

Every effort should be maintained to solve problems cooperatively and informally. CFACC maintains an "open door" policy. If any problems, questions, or concerns arise, CASAs are encouraged to speak with their Volunteer Coordinator directly, followed by the Program Director if the issue cannot be resolved. All complaints will receive thoughtful consideration and will be discussed with the individual who raises the concern.

Case Assignment and Caseload

When assigning a CASA to a particular child/case, program staff will take into consideration the strengths and limitations of each available CASA and their preferences and make a determination as to

which individuals would best serve the needs of the child(ren) on the case. All cases are unique and CASAs have varying levels of knowledge, skills and experiences. It is with this in mind that the program will seek to match the right CASA to the right case. CASAs are free to refuse an assignment for any reason. If the CASA does accept a case, their assigned Volunteer Coordinator will meet with them to review the case information and during that time will provide the CASA with the documentation needed for the assignment. A CASA shall not be assigned more than two cases at a time. An exception may be granted at the discretion of the program staff. Under the exception, a CASA shall not be assigned to more than three cases at the same time.

Direct Service and Other Practices

Each case is unique. The very best a CASA can do for a child is to ensure that the Judge and/or Magistrate has all the facts before them so they can make informed decisions that will be in the child's best interest. CASAs shall not become inappropriately involved in the case by providing counseling or other services to any party. Providing services outside the scope of the Order of Appointment can lead to conflicts of interest, liability issues, or might cause a child or family to become dependent. The CASA is a facilitator and advocates for direct service providers to provide appropriate services.

CASAs shall **NOT**:

- Give legal advice or therapeutic counseling
- Make placement arrangements for the child
- ***Give money to or purchase gifts for the child or the child's family or caregiver***
- Give money to another individual to provide services for the child or the child's family or caregiver
- Accept money or gifts from the child or the child's family or caregiver
- Transport any child, family member or other person on the case they are assigned

Mandated Reporting

CASAs are mandated reporters of suspected abuse or neglect. Any CASA who knows or reasonably suspects child abuse or neglect shall immediately report it to the appropriate authorities. If there is an emergency where the child is at risk of imminent harm or danger, the CASA shall call the local police department immediately. In all situations when the CASA suspects abuse or neglect, the CASA shall call the Cuyahoga County Child Abuse Hotline at 216-696-KIDS.

Confidentiality

CASAs shall sign a Confidentiality Agreement annually (Appendix C). Information obtained in the course of a case shall not be discussed with anyone except the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, CFACC staff, Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS), the GAL, counsel for the parties, and any others whose request for access to confidential information is permitted by statute or by the Court.

- **CASAs shall not share any records with anyone unless a formal request is filed with the Court. CASAs should put any relevant information they want to share in their report to the Court.**
- CASAs shall not solicit anyone outside of CFACC to help with their case.
- All electronic and hard copy correspondence, files, and records shall be maintained safely and securely and in a way that does not allow for any breach of confidentiality. This includes not using publically accessible computers for any CASA work and storing electronic information on a secure device and/or computer.
- CASA files shall not be left in cars, in plain sight, or in any place reasonably accessible to the public.
- CASAs are restricted from taking any photos, videos or recordings of any activities pertaining to their case.

HIPAA Policy

Due to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA"), CASAs are **only** permitted to communicate the information obtained from medical records to the other case parties, verbally in conversation or written in Court reports or email summaries. HIPAA laws prevent the dissemination of the actual paper document and the electronic version of the records. **A case party must submit a formal request for the records with the Court in order to allow for dissemination of the records.**

FERPA Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA) allow the release of educational records to any party listed on a court order, such as the child welfare agency or caseworker, caretaker, children's attorney, or CASA. FERPA requires that **all educational records of juveniles remain confidential**, and are only to be **re-disclosed** with parental consent or as required by the Court. Agencies advocating for the child are allowed access to the private educational records, under the condition that the agency will not re-disclose the records to any party **except through Court order or as required by applicable State law.**

Monthly Visitation Requirements

At a minimum, the CASA shall contact the child/parent weekly and meet in-person with the child twice a month for the first six months of the case, then monthly for the remainder of the case. The CASA is able to and should visit the child in their home monthly, and then can substitute their other visit with attending Court hearings, visiting the child in school or medical appointments, or by attending Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) Semi-Annual Reviews (SARs) and other various meetings.

Monthly Updates

CASAs shall submit a monthly update for each case using the standard form to document work (Appendix F). Monthly updates are due within 7 days from the end of each month. Ongoing failure to submit monthly updates may result in disciplinary action. ***Remember to include all time spent on a case including, contacts (successful or unsuccessful), emails, phone calls, travel time, time spent on monthly updates and Court reports, and report any trainings attended.***

If you attend a training that is offered by Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County, you must sign in upon arriving and state the time you arrived. If you attend a training hosted by another organization, document the training in your monthly update in the appropriate section. ***CASAs shall provide proof of attendance by providing a copy of a certificate of completion, written validation from the organization, if possible, or use of the Continuing Education Verification Form (Appendix J). This documentation should be attached to your monthly update.***

Court Reports

The Court report is where CASAs have the opportunity to inform the Judge and/or Magistrate what is happening with the case. For the adjudication and review hearings, CASAs are responsible for writing an objective, fact-based report with recommendations, always advocating for the best interest of the child(ren). CASAs are required to use the standard Court Report Form (Appendix G). Court reports should be typed and are considered official documents of the Court. ***Court reports are due to the Volunteer Coordinator, 14 days prior to the adjudication and review hearing.*** The Volunteer Coordinator will then review the report and offer suggestions to the CASA regarding any alterations to the report. The report will not be altered without the knowledge of the CASA. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for filing the Court report 7 days before the hearing to ensure compliance with the local laws on Court report submission.

Supervision

Volunteer Coordinators provide supervision and guidance for CASAs. Each CASA is assigned to a Volunteer Coordinator at the time of case assignment and works as a team with the CASA throughout the life of a case. The Volunteer Coordinator provides mentoring, assistance and will maintain contact regarding the status of the case as needed via email, phone or in-person sessions at a minimum monthly. Consistent contact allows CASAs to discuss concerns and obtain feedback as necessary about the case or performance. Quarterly case discussion meetings, led by the Volunteer Coordinators, are held to offer additional support and provide CASAs and GALs an opportunity to share their experiences, learn from each other, share resources and support one another.

CASAs should contact their Volunteer Coordinator IMMEDIATELY if:

- Unsure on how to proceed on the case or need clarification about a procedure
- Need guidance on community resources

- Need assistance or consultation on any matter
- Need to vent
- Unsure of a conflict of interest
- Contact information changes, including emergency contact
- Are unable able to attend a Court hearing due to an emergency
- Going on a vacation for an extended period of time
- Involved in any situation that may affect your ability to do your work as a CASA

Case Closure

Until the program receives the final journal entry from the Court stating that the Judge approves and adopts the Magistrate’s decision to close or dismiss a case, it is still considered active. The final journal entry can take several weeks to receive following the final hearing. CASAs have a time-limited relationship with the children on their cases. CASAs should make a “closure visit” to the child(ren) and family to provide closure to the relationship. Every case is unique and every relationship is different.

It is a requirement of CASA of Cuyahoga County to terminate contact with the child(ren) and the family once a case has officially been closed with the Court. Additionally, if a case is dismissed from the Court docket and then subsequently refiled, a CASA may request to be re-assigned as the CASA on the case.

Upon case closure, the CASA’s assigned Volunteer Coordinator will complete a CASA Performance Evaluation and send it to the CASA. The CASA will then complete a portion of the evaluation and return the evaluation within 14 days to their assigned Volunteer Coordinator. The CASA is also responsible for returning all case documentation to the assigned Volunteer Coordinator within 14 days of case closure.

Continuing Education

All CASAs (active and inactive) are required to obtain at least 12 hours of continuing education per calendar year in areas relevant to CASA work. In the first year, completion of the new CASA pre-service training will meet the 12 hour requirement. For additional information on continuing education opportunities, reference Appendix H.

Discipline and/or Dismissal of a CASA

It is the policy of Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County (CFACC) to apply the practice of progressive discipline, focusing first on performance improvement. Misconduct can result in disciplinary action that may include a verbal or written warning, a written agreement for corrective action, or may result in dismissal. CFACC in its sole discretion may terminate the participation of a volunteer without resorting to any disciplinary action. If the CASAs actions are dangerous or otherwise inappropriate, termination can take place immediately. The program reserves the right to “dismiss at

will.” A written termination letter will be sent to the CASA. Grounds for termination may include, but are not limited to when a CASA:

- Takes action without program or Court approval that endangers the child or is outside the role, function, or powers of the CASA program
- Engages in ex-parte communication
- Violates a program policy, Court rule or law
- Fails to complete required training
- Falsifies the application or misrepresents facts during the screening process
- Is the perpetrator of child abuse/neglect, indicated or substantiated claims
- Commits gross misconduct or insubordination
- Fails to make Court appearances
- Fails to provide and/or turn in Monthly Updates and/or Court reports on time
- Fails to demonstrate an ability to effectively carry out assigned duties
- Has no contact with program staff for an extended period of time

At the time of a volunteer dismissal, all case materials and ID badge should be returned to the program.

General Information

CFACC offices are located on the 3rd floor of the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center. The lobby is equipped with computers and a printer dedicated for CASA and GAL use. Additionally, CASAs and GALs are welcome to take any resource materials located in the lobby area. CFACC has resources from child abuse and neglect services, housing assistance, legal services, trauma services, and much more.

Also located in the CFACC lobby is our Books Galore program. Books Galore provides new and gently used books donated by the Cleveland Kids' Book Bank and community members to children served by GALs and CASAs and also provides new, like-new, and used books at supervised visitation centers, the detention center and Juvenile Court waiting areas.

Hours of Operation

Regular office hours are generally from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. For trainings that occur in the evenings and on weekends, a list of participants will be submitted to security in advance. Please be prepared to show photo identification. CASAs who need to meet in person with a Volunteer Coordinator should call and schedule an appointment.

Holidays

CFACC observes the following holidays:

Holidays	Observed
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Third Monday in January
Presidents' Day	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Indigenous Peoples' Day	Second Monday in October
Veterans' Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Day after Thanksgiving	Fourth Friday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

CFACC follows Cuyahoga County's standards regarding any other closures due to weather, specific events, or situations.

Parking

There is a parking lot north of the Juvenile Justice Center. The lot is \$2.00 (payable at the pay station in the Juvenile Justice Center lobby) or there is street parking for free.

Security

All visitors to the Court must pass through security upon arriving. Upon a CASAs first case assignment, an ID badge will be issued. The badge should be worn at all times while conducting work as a CASA. Upon resignation or termination from the program, the ID badge should be returned to the CFACC office.

Case Checklist

Action	Date Completed
Case Assignment Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> CASA and Volunteer Coordinator will coordinate a case assignment meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Coordinator shall provide all documents pertaining to the case. <input type="checkbox"/> CASAs shall sign the Conflict of Interest Policy, Confidentiality Agreement, Social Media Policy, and Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability Form. 	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
Initial Investigation plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review the Complaint, party contact information, and Appointment Order. <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain additional pertinent party contacts as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of contacts to call. <input type="checkbox"/> Research all adults involved in the case on relevant Court websites - http://clevelandlawlibrary.org/Public/Misc/Sites/Ohio.html <input type="checkbox"/> Notate main issues of the case and activities considered priority. 	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
Case Contacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contact all parties, introduce yourself and explain the CASA role. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Email and/or call the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) immediately to coordinate investigation efforts. <input type="checkbox"/> Email and/or call the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Child Protection Specialist and set up a time to meet or talk over the phone. <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to contacting parents, first contact their attorney, if they have one. Introduce yourself to the attorney and offer the Appointment Order. Ask for permission to speak to their client. <input type="checkbox"/> At a minimum, contact child/parent weekly and meet in-person twice a month for the first six months of the case, then monthly for entirety of the case at a minimum. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact family to set up an initial meeting at the home. Bring your Appointment Order. Have prepared questions about child, family and case progress. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide information to family/caregiver about the CASA program. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact other family members, therapists, teachers, and other professionals as necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain records from service providers by providing a copy of the Appointment Order and explain the CASA role. <input type="checkbox"/> Record facts, dates and impressions of each contact made in the monthly update. 	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
Interviewing/Observing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule interviews in a manner that is most relevant to the case with prepared questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews should be professional and polite, not clinical. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Observe child with Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Observe child with Father <input type="checkbox"/> Observe child with Foster Parents/Other Caregiver (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the home <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the school, or medical facility (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Only take notes during the interview to clarify dates, phone numbers or other important details. <input type="checkbox"/> Document the meeting afterwards in your monthly update. 	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>

Action	Date Completed
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Record-Keeping

CASAs shall take notes; maintain complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews and information gathered about the child and the child’s circumstances. Case notes should be documented on the monthly update and include:

- Person contacted and/or document reviewed
- Type of contact (in-person, phone, text, etc.)
- Date and time
- Location
- Factual observations
- Facts gathered
- Summary and follow-up
- Documentation should include time spent on completing the monthly update and Court reports.

Court Hearings and Court Reports

- Add Court dates and report due dates to your calendar.**
- Appear at all hearings** to advocate for the child’s best interests and be prepared to offer a summary of your recommendations.
- Submit a Court report to the Volunteer Coordinator (14) days before a scheduled adjudication or review hearing (Appendix F).
- Make objective fact-based recommendations regarding the child’s best interests.

Meetings

- CASAs may attend all CCDCFS meetings regarding the child.
- Other possible meetings include school meetings, residential facility meetings, and any team meetings called by other parties.
- CASAs shall seek cooperative solutions by acting as a facilitator.
- CASAs shall remain actively involved in meetings until the case is terminated.

Case Closure

- Schedule a “closure” visit with family and child.
- Have family, caregiver, or child victim complete the Victim Assistance Satisfaction Survey, in person or by phone.
- Terminate contact with child and family.
- Return all case documentation to the Volunteer Coordinator within fourteen (14) days.



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CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to prevent the interest of staff, CASAs/GALs, and paid consultants from interfering with the performance of their duties to Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County (CFACC). This policy prohibits employees, paid consultants, CASAs/GALs from having direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions, or professional services of CFACC and requires the disclosure of any conflicts of interest and the recusal of any interested party in a decision relating to the above.

PROCEDURES

1. A conflict of interest is defined as an interest that might affect, or might reasonably appear to affect, the judgment or conduct of any staff member, CASA/GAL or paid consultant in a manner that is averse to the interest of CFACC.
2. A conflict of interest may exist when the interest or potential interests of any staff member, CASA/GAL, paid consultant, or that person's close relative, or any individual, group, or organization to which the person associated with CFACC has allegiance, may be seen as competing with the interest of the program, or may impair such person's independence or loyalty to CFACC.
3. No staff person, CASA/GAL, or paid consultant may participate in any decision-making process when he/she, or members of his/her immediate family, or any party, group or organization to which said person has allegiance, may have an interest that may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of CFACC.
4. Staff members, CASAs/GALs, and paid consultants must weigh carefully all circumstances in which there exists the possibility of accusations of competing interest and make timely disclosures of any possible conflict of interest and any and all relevant information pertaining to the possible conflict and may not participate in any decision-making process related to the matter in which there may be a conflict of interest. Further, staff, CASAs/GALs, and paid consultants shall excuse themselves from the room when there is any deliberation and decision-making concerning the matter in which there may be a conflict of interest. If a potential conflict

is identified, the matter under discussion should be tabled until the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors can convene to determine whether or not a conflict exists.

5. The minutes of the Board and/or Executive Committee meetings shall reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not present during the deliberation and decision on the matter of interest.
6. In the event of a possible conflict of interest in a decision-making process within the CFACC office, the Executive Director shall report to the Board in writing that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not in the room and did not participate in the final deliberation and decision on the matter of interest.
7. Notwithstanding the above, the Board may waive the foregoing restrictions and allow a staff member, CASA/GAL, or paid consultant with a conflict of interest to join in such portion of the discussion on the matter of interest as the Board deems appropriate.
8. When there is doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists, the matter shall be resolved by a vote of the Executive Committee, excluding the person(s) who may have the possible conflict.
9. Transactions with related parties should occur only if the following are observed:
 - a. A material transaction is fully disclosed in the audited financial statements of the organization;
 - b. The related party is excluded from the discussion and approval for such transaction;
 - c. A competitive bid or comparable valuation exists; and
 - d. The organization's Board has acted upon and demonstrated that the transaction is in the best interest of the organization.
10. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest prior to becoming involved in a transaction or decision affected by such conflict may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from a position with CFACC. The extent of such action will be determined by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) may be exposed to information which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the policy of Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County (CFACC) that such information must be kept confidential both during and after involvement with the organization.

Respecting the privacy of our donors, board members, staff, volunteers, clientele and of Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County itself is a basic value of CFACC. CFACC expects you to respect the privacy of donors, board members, staff, volunteers, and clientele and to maintain their personal and financial information as confidential.

_____ I have been made aware that various federal and state laws govern the matter of confidentiality of Juvenile Court records. I am aware that all information obtained in my role at CFACC is confidential and shall not be disclosed except to the Court, as the Court directs, or the law permits; per the Order of Appointment.

_____ I do agree to maintain the confidentiality imposed by this Order of the Court.

_____ I am aware of the FERPA and USA regulations that govern the disclosure of confidential Juvenile educational records to and by CASAs.

_____ I understand that I may gain access to private educational records and information while performing as a CASA.

_____ I understand that educational “records” denotes more than just educational transcripts, and rather includes the entire educational record maintained by the child’s school.

_____ I am aware of the HIPAA rules and regulations that govern the disclosure of confidential Juvenile medical records to and by CASAs.

_____ I understand that I may gain access to private health information while performing as a CASA. I will strive to adhere to HIPAA rules and regulations on private health information privacy and security even if not required by law.

_____ I understand that this confidentiality requirement applies to anyone involved with CFACC, including but not limited to staff, CASAs/GALs, paid consultants, interns, externs, work study students or temporary hires.

_____ I understand that care shall also be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared. All records dealing with specific clients must be treated as confidential.

_____ I understand that I am expected to return materials containing privileged or confidential information at the close of a case and/or separation from CFACC.

_____ I accept full responsibility for maintaining the confidentiality of all records and information. I will not remove any written records from the CFACC office without express permission of staff.

This agreement is entered into for the purpose of providing the best possible service to the client population. I fully understand that failure to complete or comply with any of the above requirements may result in my removal from my relationship with CFACC.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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ONLINE COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND CASA VOLUNTEERS

There are many staff and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers contributing to online spaces such as blogs, social networking sites, wikis, forums, and photo and video sharing sites. All kinds of new communications and social networking tools are available to staff and CASA volunteers and anyone who wants to share insights, express opinions, and communicate in a globally distributed conversation. The following guidelines will help you talk about your involvement with the program in a transparent and professional manner. While the program recognizes the value of posting personal online content, it is important that those who choose to tell their story online understand what is recommended, expected, and required. This policy is built largely on the work of the American Red Cross and the Easter Seals. We thank these organizations for disclosing their policies publicly so that all of us can learn from them.

General Internet Policy

Staff and CASA volunteers shall refrain from posting inappropriate material, links to inappropriate websites, or undesirable comments, references, or pictures anywhere on the Web where the posting directly or indirectly makes reference to the program or any name meant to refer to the organization. Anyone found to be in violation of this policy may be sanctioned at the discretion of the management staff.

If you choose to identify yourself as affiliated with the program or discuss matters related to the program on a personal website, blog or networking profile, many readers will assume you are speaking on behalf of our organization. In light of this possibility, your communications should be transparent, ethical, and accurate. The program expects staff and CASA volunteers to respect our mission and hold confidential most details of their work.

These guidelines will further explain the expectations and responsibilities of communicating online and having a presence in social media.

Online Communications Guidelines

DO	DO NOT
Use disclaimers	Reveal confidential information
Be transparent	
Be accurate	
Be considerate	
Respect copyright laws	
Tell us about your blog	

Be generous
Be a good blogger
Respect work commitments

Use Disclaimers

Make it clear that the views you are expressing are yours alone and not necessarily those of the program.

Be Transparent

If you discuss the program, then you have a duty to disclose your role within the organization. If you are creating an online space, use the entire chapter/region name. Social networks function well as smaller communities. Representing your community will increase activity from supporters in your community. National CASA and Ohio CASA are responsible for creating national and state CASA online presences.

Be Accurate

Even though your blog posts may be primarily made up of personal opinion, do your research well and check that your facts are accurate. Make sure you have permission to post any copyrighted or confidential information (e.g., images, statistics) to your blog, and be careful about posting or linking to items that may contain viruses.

Be Considerate

Remember that anyone, including fellow CASA volunteers and staff, may be actively reading what you publish online. Refrain from using your blog to bash or embarrass the program, families, our donors, or your colleagues. If you have suggestions for improvements, please state them constructively or better yet, go through the proper channels to air your concerns and share your suggestions.

Respect Copyright Laws

Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County (CFACC) and National CASA copyrights and registered trademarks. Please note that any photos taken by staff may be used in our own marketing documents and online publications.

Tell Us About Your Blog

We want to aggregate all the powerful stories and showcase your individual contribution to the overall mission and gather links on our website. If you have a blog and you intend to discuss the program, please contact the office at 216-443-3377 for questions, concerns, or general guidance on how to engage the blogosphere.

Be Generous

The Internet is all about building relationships via connecting with links, so if you see something interesting, valuable, or relevant, link to it! The more you link to relevant material, the more contacts you will make and the more popular your own blog will become.

Be a Good Blogger

Writing captivating online content is hard work and a commitment. We suggest if you decide to jump into the blogosphere, do so with a commitment to post regularly and well; link to others and show your unique contributions.

Respect Work Commitments

Please remember that blogging and other social networking activities are personal and should be done on your own time unless you have specifically been assigned to perform an online activity related to your responsibilities as an employee or CASA volunteer.

Don't Reveal Confidential Information

Your work at CFACC is largely confidential. If you do blog about CFACC or participate in a discussion of the program on other online sites, you must accomplish this while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the Court and all parties to a case. When making decisions about your online content, refer often to the following documents you agreed to when you became a volunteer:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Policies and Procedures

If involved on a current case, always remember that you must maintain objectivity and refrain from subjective language. It is unacceptable to discuss online any identifiable details of current cases.

It is acceptable to discuss general details and to use non-identifying pseudonyms so long as the information provided does not violate your confidentiality agreement, and does not contain information recognizable to the family or others associated with the family and/or case. You may use the general terms "children's services" and "John Doe," etc. You should be careful to protect the dignity of families, children, and social agencies, even if they are not named.

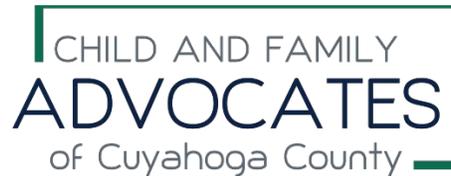
Do not link to personal pages of families or children you may encounter in your capacity with the program. This includes instant messenger names, blogs, photo sharing sites, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

I have read and agree to follow the online and social media guidelines for staff and CASA volunteers of CFACC.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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VOLUNTEER RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

This release and waiver of liability releases Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County (CFACC) from any and all liability and/or claims, known and unknown which may arise from the services I provide as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer.

_____ I understand and acknowledge that this release discharges CFACC from any liability or claim that I may have against CFACC with respect to bodily injury, personal injury, illness, death, or property damage that may result when I am providing services as a CASA volunteer.

_____ I understand that CFACC does not assume any responsibility for or obligations to provide me with financial or other assistance, including but not limited to medical, health or disability benefits or insurance of any nature in the event of an injury, illness, death or damage to me or my property.

_____ I hereby release and discharge CFACC from any claim which arises or may hereafter arise as a result of any first-aid, treatment or other medical services rendered in connection with any incident, accident, or emergency while I am providing CASA volunteer services.

_____ I understand that the services I provide as a volunteer may include activities, such as conducting home and school visits. As a volunteer, I assume the risk of injury or harm and release CFACC from all liability for injury, illness, and death or property damage resulting from these potential activities.

_____ I understand that I provide my own transportation for the volunteer work I perform, which includes conducting home and school visits and attending trainings, meetings, and court hearings. I maintain my own automobile liability and medical insurance, which will cover any accidents or injuries that may occur while I am performing my volunteer duties. Further, I assume the risk of injury or harm and release CFACC from all liability for injury, illness, and death or property damage resulting from traveling by automobile or other means when I am providing services as a CASA volunteer.

_____ **I understand that CASAs are not to provide transportation to any child, family member, and/or caregiver, at any time while performing CASA duties.** I understand that by signing this release, I am committing to refrain from transporting any child, family member, and/or caregiver. I shall hold harmless, and indemnify CFACC, its board, employees, agents, and other volunteers from and against all claims, accusations, notices, judgments, rulings, liabilities, expenses, etc. that may exist as a result of my actions, inactions, errors, acts, or omissions.

_____ I understand that CASAs shall not carry any deadly weapon, firearm and/or dangerous ordnance as defined in Section 2923.11 of the Ohio Revised Code while on any property owned, leased or controlled by CFACC and while conducting any duties of a CASA. CASA volunteers who violate this guideline policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the program.

_____ I understand that providing gifts and/or donations to any child, family member, ward and/or caregiver while acting in the capacity as a CASA volunteer through Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County (“CFACC”) is strictly prohibited. I hereby assume all risks and liability associated with any such action(s) taken on my part. Further, I hold CFACC harmless from any and all resultant risks, responsibilities and liabilities.

By signing below, I express my understanding and intent to knowingly, willingly and voluntarily enter into this release and waiver of liability.

CASA Name

CFACC Staff Name

CASA Signature

CFACC Staff Signature

Date

Date

Appendix F



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Monthly Update	
CASA Name:	Month/Year:
Child(ren)'s Names:	Child(ren)'s Address:
Contacts or Visits Made with Child(ren), Parents, and/or Related Parties	
Date:	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00	Description of Contact or Visit:
Mileage:	
Date:	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00	Description of Contact or Visit:
Mileage:	
Date:	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00	Description of Contact or Visit:
Mileage:	
Date:	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25	Description of Contact or Visit:
Mileage:	

<input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage:	
Date:	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage:	Description of Contact or Visit:
Case Plan Issues and Progress:	
Date:	Monthly Update and Court Reporting:
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00	

Total Hours: _____ **Total Mileage:** _____

Please describe any continuing education hours earned this month and attach applicable documentation.

Continuing Education Hours Earned		
Date:	Total Time:	Type of Activity or Name of Presentation:
	Total Hours:	

CASA:

Date:

National CASA requires CASAs to keep monthly activity logs. In addition, the program can apply for grants and other funding based on the hours spent and miles driven by CASAs. Please complete your hours and mileage for each month. Remember that your time should include: transportation time, visits, record reading, all communication with individuals and providers associated with the case.

CHILD AND FAMILY
ADVOCATES
of Cuyahoga County

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Monthly Update	
CASA Name: CASA Susan	Month/Year: January 2016
Child(ren)'s Name: Adam Bell	Child(ren)'s Address: 123 State Rd., Cleveland, OH 44444
Contacts or Visits Made with Child(ren), Parents, and/or Related Parties	
Date: 1/1/16	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage: 0	Description of Contact or Visit: Phone call to GAL. CASA and GAL exchanged contact information. Coordinated home visit for 1/5/16. Discussed history of the case.
Date: 1/2/16	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage: 0	Description of Contact or Visit: Emailed Child Protection Specialist to exchange contact information. Coordinated a time to discuss complaint and history of the family. Child Protection Specialist reported that she has been unsuccessful in her attempts to reach the family.
Date: 1/5/16	Type of Contact: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage: 15	Description of Contact or Visit: Home visit with GAL, Mother and Adam. Arrived at the home for scheduled visit. CASA introduced self and provided information about CASA to Mother. Mother provided a tour of her home and it appeared to be in satisfactory condition. Mother explained that she has been busy participating in drug treatment through Catholic Charities and attending three AA meetings a week. Adam appeared to be happy and Mother was attentive to his needs. Mother shared that her aunt babysits Adam when she has appointments. Adam appears to be developmentally on target based on this CASA's observations. Adam does have his own room, and crib and CASA observed a lot of toys around to help keep child stimulated. Next home visit has been scheduled for 1/15/16 at 2:00 pm.
Date: 1/5/16	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time:	Description of Contact or Visit:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage: 0	Emailed Child Protection Specialist to update her about home visit.
Date: 1/10/16	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage:	Description of Contact or Visit: Phone call to Mother to check to see how things were going. She reports going to all her AA meetings. She mentioned that Adam had a cold and went to see the doctor. CASA confirmed upcoming visit.
Date: 1/15/16	Type of Contact: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage: 15	Description of Contact or Visit: Arrived at home for scheduled visit. No one was home. CASA attempted to call Mother, but was unsuccessful, left a voicemail. CASA left note for Mother, requested her to call and reschedule appointment.
Date: 1/15/16	Type of Contact: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Court Hearing
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00 Mileage: 0	Description of Contact or Visit: Called Catholic Charities caseworker to verify that Mother has been attending treatment and passing random drug screens. Caseworker did report that Mother has been compliant and tests have been negative.
Case Plan Issues and Progress:	Mother has been compliant with treatment services through Catholic Charities and is attending AA meetings in accordance to case plan. Pre-trial scheduled 2/15/16 CASA plans to attend CCDCFS review meeting on 2/15/16
Date: 1/30/16	Monthly Update and Court Reporting:
Time: <input type="checkbox"/> .25 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.25 <input type="checkbox"/> .50 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.50 <input type="checkbox"/> .75 <input type="checkbox"/> 1.75 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00	Worked on Monthly update

Total Hours: 3.5 Total Mileage: 30

Please describe any continuing education hours earned this month and attach applicable documentation.

Continuing Education Hours Earned		
Date:	Total Time:	Type of Activity or Name of Presentation:
1/7/16	1	Local Gang Training at Juvenile Justice Center
	Total Hours:	
	1	

CASA Susan _____

2/1/16 _____

CASA:

Date:

National CASA requires CASAs to keep monthly activity logs. In addition, the program can apply for grants and other funding based on the hours spent and miles driven by CASAs. Please complete your hours and mileage for each month. Remember that your time should include: transportation time, visits, record reading, all communication with individuals and providers associated with the case.

TIPS ON WRITING THE CASA COURT REPORT

The Court report is the CASAs chance to tell the Jurist what is happening on the case and make a recommendation based on that information. The Jurist reviews countless reports a day. For each adjudication and review hearing, CASAs are responsible for writing an objective, fact-based report with recommendations, always advocating for the best interest of the child(ren) on the case. The Court report provides a way to systematically organize pertinent information and give the Court a clear mental image of the child's situation.

- Allow plenty of time for writing the report. A good report will take several hours. If the documentation in your monthly updates is in order and up to date, this will speed up the process of writing your report.
- Familiarize yourself with the CASA Court report format and review the examples that are provided to you. Please review Appendix G.
- Throughout your investigation, think of what information should be included in your report and mark your notes accordingly. **The report should be FACT BASED, CHILD FOCUSED AND FAMILY CENTERED.**
- Be clear, state facts and identify your information sources clearly. Avoid using technical jargon and abbreviations. **DO NOT INCLUDE PERSONAL OPINIONS.**
- Write as if the person reading the report (the Jurist) knows nothing about the case. Remember to look at the “whole picture” of your case; do not focus on just the areas in the complaint. Remember to include where the information came from, for example, *Mother reported that she has completed a mental health assessment through Catholic Charities.*
- Speak of yourself in the 3rd person, for example, *This CASA had the opportunity to speak to the school principal and teacher at the IEP meeting.*
- When writing about intangible things, such as the child's emotional well-being or a caretaker's behavior, use words such as “appears”, “as evidenced by”, or “based on this CASA's observations”. For example, *Mother appeared to be in a depressive/anxious state as evidenced by Mother crying throughout the meeting, she reports sleeping excessively and being in a constant state of worry.* Remember your role; CASAs are not psychiatrists or psychologists and cannot diagnosis.
- Remember to include any information that you gather from the discovery documents and report where the information came from.

- Do not use the names of any parties in your report, for example, use, *This CASA met with the Child Protection Specialist, GAL, and Mother to review the case plan objectives.* Always capitalize Mother and Father.
- Use the child's first name throughout the report.
- Stick to the facts of the case. Keep in mind the child's need for a safe, permanent home and what would ensure the physical, emotional, developmental, and medical well-being of the child. If you state an opinion and not the facts, you lose your credibility and you put your work and the program's reputation at risk.
- Your report is important! All parties on the case have a right to read your report and your name will be on it.
- **Court reports should be submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator no less than 14 days prior to any adjudication or review hearing.** Stay organized by marking the due dates on your calendar. Volunteer Coordinators are required to have the report filed with the Clerk of Courts seven (7) days prior to the hearing.

Be prepared to orally speak to and defend the information contained in your Court report, as well as your recommendations, during the Court hearing. As a CASA, you have a very important responsibility to the child and the Court. Your Court report becomes part of the history of the case record.

COURT REPORT FORM AND INSTRUCTIONS

***Remove all questions in each section. The questions are to guide you on the information that should be presented in each section. Some questions may not apply to your case. Use complete sentences. This report becomes part of the official Court case file. Inform the Court of what facts you've gathered since the last Court report (if any) and what the current progress is. Always assume that whoever is reading this report has no prior knowledge about the case. Give full factual details, no opinions.**

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
JUVENILE DIVISION
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**

IN THE MATTER OF:)	
Child's First Last Name D.O.B. / /20	)	Case No: AD
Child's First Last Name D.O.B. / /20	)	Case No: AD
)	
	)	JUDGE: First Last Name
	)	MAGISTRATE: First Last Name
)	
	)	COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL
	)	ADVOCATE (CASA) COURT REPORT

Now comes CASAs First Last Name as Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), for the above-captioned, minor child/children and hereby submits the following CASA Report and Recommendation.

CASE (LEGAL) HISTORY:

Most of the information in this section can be found in the Complaint.

- Date of Complaint filed with the Court. (Date is stamped on the Complaint)
- Division of Children & Family Services (DCFS) received referral because of what alleged concerns.
- What is the agency requesting? (Protective Supervision, Temporary Custody, Permanent Custody)
- Date CASA was appointed to case.
- Dates of Court hearings that have already occurred pertaining to this case.

CHILD (REN)'S PLACEMENT:

In this section, you want to write about each placement that the child has been in since involvement with the Court. Include the name of the placement, date the child entered the placement and reason for moving.

- Write the physical address of placements. (unless it's a foster home-confidential)

- Who are the children residing with?
- Who are the adults in the home and what is their level of appropriateness?
- Mention every adult in the home and anyone the child spends a significant amount of time with including grandparents, relatives, significant others, etc.
- Have those people had background checks if they are in the home?
- What is the history of those relationships?
- Describe the conditions of the home?
- Does the child have own room or do they share?
- Describe home: apartment complex, single home, double?
- What is the activity like; are there a lot of people coming in and out of the home?
- If child is in foster care, how is child adjusting?

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED:

- Who have you contacted since last hearing?
- List your contacts with the important adults in the child's life (parent(s), caregivers, relatives, parents' significant others, DCFS, teachers, doctors, therapists, probation officers, other service providers, law enforcement, etc.)
- Always attempt to talk with child by themselves at least once.
- What have you done on the case since the last hearing?
- List the activity and the dates (ex. hearings, home/school visits, observed visitations, meetings, reviews, etc.)
- Always attempt to observe the child with each parent or caregiver.

RECORDS/DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:

List what records you have reviewed, including anything CASA staff provided to you (example, Court records, DCFS records, school records, background checks, medical, mental health, drug/alcohol, police, criminal, and civil records, etc.).

CHILD (REN)'S WELL BEING:

The following are suggested questions, answer for each child on the case:

- Are the child's basic needs being met?
- How is child's health? Immunizations up to date? Are they on medications? If so, what kind and why?
- Are they developmentally on target per pediatrician?
- Do parents/caregiver follow recommendations of pediatrician if applicable?
- Any mental health, medical, dental, or safety concerns?
- Is child in therapy? Where, why, frequency?
- Does child appear to be safe in current environment?
- Are children visiting parents, siblings, and relatives?
- Does the child have any particular needs? Medication, clothing, school supplies, etc.?
- Does the child appear to be happy and are the basic needs being met?

- With whom does the child socialize, friends in the neighborhood, school? Foster siblings?
- What type of activities does the child engage in? Church, girl/boy scouts, sports?

CHILD(REN)'S CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT/STATUS:

The following are suggested questions, answer for each child on the case:

- Where is the child attending school?
- What grade is the child in?
- Is child age appropriate for that grade?
- What are the child's grades?
- How is the child's attendance?
- Does the child display any behavior problems? If so, disciplinary actions?
- Is the child in regular or special education? Do they have an IEP?
- How many school changes have occurred?
- Is the child in any extra-curricular activities?
- Any additional needs? (Example-Tutoring)

MOTHER:

The following are suggested questions:

- Always attempt to observe child with parent.
- What is Mother's relationship to the child(ren)?
- Describe observations of the interactions/visitations.
- Any mental health, drug/alcohol, finances, housing, employment and other issues?
- Is she involved in any services/treatment as of now? Is she compliant?

FATHER (S):

The following are suggested questions:

- Always attempt to observe child with parent
- What is Father's relationship to the child(ren)?
- Describe observations of the interactions/visitations.
- Any mental health, drug/alcohol, finances, housing, employment and other issues?
- Is he involved in any services/treatment as of now? Is he compliant?
- Even if there has been no contact with Father, is there any information in the Complaint that can be listed here?

LEGAL CUSTODIAN/MAIN CAREGIVER:

The following are suggested questions:

- What is the caregiver's relationship to the child(ren)?
- Describe observations of the interactions/visitations.
- Any mental health, drug/alcohol, finances, housing, employment and other issues?
- Always attempt to observe child with the caregiver.

CASE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

Be sure to view the case plan and attempt to be involved in developing the objectives.

- What do parents need to complete as part of their Case Plan? (Main objectives)
- Describe the services and what progress has been made.
- Are parents/caregivers participating, at what level? If not, why, are there obstacles, such as transportation, money, etc.?
- Do parents/caregivers understand what is expected from them?
- Are they demonstrating what they have learned? How so?
- Does the family need additional resources that haven't been addressed?

THE WISHES OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN:

- What would the child like to see happen? (even if it is not what the CASA would recommend as the child's best interests)
- How you ascertain their wishes will be different for every child.
- Always consider age, developmental level, psychological well-being, etc.
- Answer these questions for each child on the case.

SUMMARY:

- Summarize key facts that you presented throughout the Court report. ***This section should NOT include any new information that wasn't stated above.***

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations should be supported by the facts throughout the Court report.

Based on the above mentioned information, this CASA makes the following recommendations in the child's best interests:

CUSTODY:

- Who should have Legal Custody (responsibility) for the child?
 - Legal Custody: Grants a parent or suitable individual the right to make important, long-term decisions regarding their child or children.
- Should DCFS be involved? Please see below.
 - Protective Supervision: A dispositional order where the child is allowed to remain in the home of the parent, relative, or suitable non-relative, subjective to compliance with supervision by CCDCFS for protection of the child.
 - Temporary Custody: A dispositional order which gives temporary custody to CCDCFS or another suitable individual.
 - Permanent Custody: A dispositional order which terminates parental rights and vests permanent custody of a child to CCDCFS for the purposes of adoption.

PLACEMENT:

- Where should the child physically reside?

VISITATION:

- Should there be visitation with anyone living outside the home? If so, supervised or unsupervised, etc.?

SERVICES FOR CHILD:

- What services does the child need that maybe haven't been addressed?
- How has the CASA facilitated/linked the child to services or what is the plan?

SERVICES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:

- What services does the parents/caregivers need, do they need to continue working on their case plan objectives? Do they need additional resources/services that haven't been addressed?
- How has the CASA facilitated/linked the family to services or what is the plan?

OTHER CONCERNS: Anything else of concern that does not fit into any category above.

The CASA reserves the right to orally amend this report during the hearing.

Respectfully Submitted,

CASA's First and Last Name, Court Appointed Special Advocate

Reviewed By: _____
First Last Name, Volunteer Coordinator

Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County

First Last Name
Program Director

Date: / /20

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
JUVENILE DIVISION
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**

IN THE MATTER OF:)	
Jon Jones D.O.B. 01/01/2010	)	Case No: AD12345677
Sarah Jones D.O.B. 02/02/2015	)	Case No: AD12345678
Chris Jones D.O.B. 03/03/2017	)	Case No: AD12345679
)	
	)	JUDGE: Denise N. Rini
	)	MAGISTRATE: Carolyn K. Ranke
)	
	)	COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL
	)	ADVOCATE (CASA) COURT REPORT

Now comes CASAs First Last Name as Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), for the above-captioned, minor children and hereby submits the following CASA Report and Recommendation.

CASE (LEGAL) HISTORY:

The Complaint was filed with the Court on 4/19/2018 due to Mother allegedly failing to send Jon to school on a regular basis. Jon had failed the academic year due to excessive absences and he has special needs, which have not been addressed due to his absences. Also, Mother fails to provide a stable and independent living environment for the children. For the past two years, Mother has been staying with various friends and relatives for periods of days and weeks. Additionally, Mother unlawfully uses marijuana several times a week while being the sole caregiver for the children.

Alleged Father of Jon has failed to establish paternity and has failed to support, visit, or communicate with Jon since birth. He is currently incarcerated for drug trafficking (see Summit County case no. CR-2011-11-1111-A). He has prior convictions for domestic violence and aggravated menacing (see Cuyahoga County case no. CR-12-111111-A). Alleged Father of Sarah and Father of Chris has also failed to support, visit, or communicate with his children on a consistent basis.

CCDCFS is requesting Legal Custody to remain with Mother and Protective Supervision be granted to CCDCFS. This CASA was appointed on 5/4/2018. A Preliminary Hearing was held on 5/21/2018 and a Pretrial Hearing was held on 6/25/2018. Adjudication and Disposition are scheduled for 7/9/2018.

CHILD (REN)'S PLACEMENT:

The children reside with Mother and Father of Sarah and Chris at 1234 Milton Drive, Cleveland, Ohio 44105. She has a one-bedroom apartment at this time, but the children have moved several times in their lives. Prior to the Complaint being filed, the family was residing in South Euclid.

Mother is the primary adult home with the children during the day. She interacts with the children in a playful, loving way. Upon the 7/2/2018 visit to the home, this CASA saw Mother feed and change the youngest child. This CASA also observed Mother balancing responsibility of caring for the two young ones, who are both high energy.

Father of Sarah and Chris is also present in the home. He spends a significant amount of time working. The home is in transition due to their recent move. It is not organized or set up for three children and two adults. The home is a one bedroom, and therefore creates difficulties with balancing family belongings, toys, and food in organized ways. The older two children share a room, while the youngest sleeps in a crib near the parents in the living room. The apartment is part of a row of apartments along Miles Avenue.

Upon the 7/2/2018 visit to the home, Grandmother to the children was also present. Due to her health concerns, Mother stated that she is not very close to the children, but does visit sometimes. No other family in the area is involved in the life of the children.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED:

5/21/2018- Preliminary Hearing
5/24/2018- Attempts to contact Central Collaborative
6/6/2018- Call to Mother
6/20/2018- Call to Mother
6/25/2018- Pretrial Hearing
7/2/2018- Visit to home

Additionally, this CASA was unable to visit with Father of Jon due to his incarceration.

RECORDS/DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:

Complaint
Contact information
Case plan

CHILD (REN)'S WELL BEING:

All children appear happy, healthy, and safe.

Jon- Jon is 8 years old. Jon was present on 6/25/2018 for the Pretrial Hearing. Jon appeared to be highly active and energetic. Jon did not answer questions in full sentences and did not hold his attention to conversation with this CASA very long. The family's moving has had a significant impact on Jon's schooling. He is academically behind and has been identified as needing special education services. Jon is attending summer enrichment and is trying to make up for the school missed during the beginning of 2018.

Sarah- Sarah is 2 years old (soon to be 3). She is not yet of school age. She appears happy and healthy. She does have a skin condition on her left arm that this CASA has not asked about yet. Sarah enjoys running and playing with her siblings and parents.

Chris- Chris is 1 years old. He is not yet of school age. He appears healthy and happy. He has recently learned to walk and is very energetic. Chris had a scrape on his face on 7/2/2018 that was reported to be him falling when walking outside.

CHILD(REN)'S CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT/STATUS:

Jon- Jon will be moving to Miles School in the fall. Jon is currently attending summer enrichment at Bolton Elementary. Jon will be in 4th grade in the fall. He is the appropriate age for that grade. He is on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and will need to continue his education needs to stay on track for school. This CASA has not yet seen a copy of his IEP. Jon appears socially and emotionally behind peers of his age. Jon attended Miles, then a school in South Euclid, and now Miles again. These changes have occurred during moves. Jon is doing enrichment during the summer. He is also playing football with the local community team. He appears to like science, including his trips to the Science Center during his summer enrichment program.

Jon would benefit from academic tutoring and assistance with social development by a school therapist.

Sarah and Chris – Both are attending daycare at Mz. Mary's Little Angels Daycare near home.

MOTHER:

Mother appears loving to her children. She was observed holding, hugging, and playing with the children on multiple occasions. The CCDCFS case plan states that Mother should have a mental health screening. It has not been conducted yet. Mother has admitted drug use, and was asked to submit regular urine screenings. Mother would benefit from financial support, including that from the Father of Jon in the form child support. Housing has been a large barrier for success for the family. Due to frequent moves and displacement, the children have experienced interrupted schooling and childhood. Mother does not work at this time.

FATHER (S):

Father of Jon- He is currently incarcerated. He has not been contacted by this CASA. He does not have custody of Jon, or Jon's half-sister.

Father of Sarah and Chris- He has been in his children and Jon's lives for at least 3 years. He is the father figure for all three children. He currently works as a roofer and is also looking for employment through Minute Men. Father is often working to support the family. Father took a role in feeding and assisting with the children during both Court dates. Father appears to get along with his children and Jon well. Father has indicated that he wishes to help the family move apartments into a unit that suits the size of the family. Father has also been asked to conduct urine screenings due to his drug use.

CASE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

The parents have been asked to comply with the following:

Mental Health- Mother to complete screening for mental health.

Drug Screening- Both Father and Mother to complete drug screenings.

School attendance- Increased school attendance for Jon.

Housing stability- Family is in need of securing adequate housing.

At this time progress has been made in improving the housing situation and school attendance.

Mother seemed unaware of some of the CCDCFS case plan objectives. She will need assistance with scheduling the drug screening, mental health screening, and parenting classes asked of her. Mother understands the need to make progress in various areas in order to maintain custody of her children.

The family needs housing assistance. They currently need a larger place and they also need a place with furniture that suits the need of 3 children. They have toys and clothes, and food, but are unable to maintain it in an orderly fashion due to the housing and furniture situations.

THE WISHES OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN:

This CASA has not been able to speak with Jon without the presence of a parent. However, Jon and his parents appear bonded. Sarah and Chris are too young to express their wishes on the matter.

SUMMARY:

The children's basic needs are being met. The children have two parents who are taking care of housing, food, and safety needs. The parents have work to do to improve the situation for the family, including stabilizing housing, financial stability, and ending the use of marijuana. Mother and Father also need significant assistance in the area of completing these tasks as they are looking after three young children with various needs and attentions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the above mentioned information, this CASA makes the following recommendations in the children's best interests:

CUSTODY: Legal Custody should remain with Mother, with Protective Supervision by CCDCFS.

PLACEMENT: The children should reside with Mother and Father, in a larger unit of the building on Miles Avenue.

VISITATION: At this time no other visitation is recommended.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN: The children need educational opportunities. Jon is in need of tutoring and assistance during the summer, school year, and after school to stay on track for his grade. Sarah is approaching the age of Preschool and should move beyond daycare when possible. She is in need of early-learning to prepare for Kindergarten. Chris does not need any services at this time.

SERVICES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS: The parents need to continue progress on the CCDCFS case plan. They also need additional help securing an apartment that accommodates the large family, and furniture (dressers, tables, etc.).

OTHER CONCERNS: N/A

The CASA reserves the right to orally amend this report during the hearing.

Respectfully Submitted,

CASA's First and Last Name, Court Appointed Special Advocate

Reviewed By: _____
First Last Name, Volunteer Coordinator

Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County

First Last Name
Program Director

Date: / /20

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
JUVENILE DIVISION
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**

IN THE MATTER OF:)
Jacob Mallory D.O.B. 1/1/2017) Case No: AD12345678
)
) JUDGE: Michael J. Ryan
) MAGISTRATE: Ginny S. Millas
)
) **COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL**
) **ADVOCATE (CASA) COURT REPORT**

Now comes CASAs First Last Name as Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), for the above-captioned, minor child and hereby submits the following CASA Report and Recommendation.

CASE (LEGAL) HISTORY:

The Complaint of Neglect was filed with the Court on 3/28/2018, due to Mother and Father allegedly failing to ensure that Jacob’s medical needs are being met. Jacob has respiratory health issues and was hospitalized overnight on 2/27/2018 for possible pneumonia. Mother and Father have allegedly missed 5 medical appointments, including a follow-up for the above-mentioned hospitalization and also pre- and post-hospitalization well-child checkups; failed to ensure that Jacob is up to date on immunizations; and failed to complete a pulmonology referral for Jacob’s condition. Mother has a substance abuse issue, specifically marijuana, which interferes with her ability to appropriately parent Jacob, including exposing him to marijuana in utero, and continuing her use since that time. Additionally, Mother has two older children who were adjudicated neglected and dependent, due in part to Mother’s substance abuse, and were subsequently committed to the Legal Custody of their father (see case number AD11111111 and AD11111112). Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) is seeking Protective Supervision of Jacob.

This CASA was appointed on 4/5/2018. The Preliminary Hearing was held on 5/7/2018 and Adjudication is scheduled for 6/19/2018.

CHILD (REN)’S PLACEMENT:

Jacob has been residing with his Father at 12345 Milton Drive, Euclid, Ohio 44117 since 4/13/2018, which was when Father left Mother’s home and took Jacob with him. Prior to that time, Jacob resided with his Mother and Father at Mother’s home located at 1234 Dalton Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. Father shares this home with Jacob’s Paternal Grandmother (who owns the home), Father’s two adult Sisters (one of whom has multiple developmental disabilities), and Father’s minor Brother. Jacob has been in Father’s care full-time except for occasional visits with his Mother at her home, including at least two overnight stays. Jacob’s Paternal Grandmother and Father’s 18-year-old Sister assist with Jacob’s care and are appropriate supplemental caregivers. Although Mother has been upset and angry with Father for not bringing Jacob to spend more time with her, she has not objected to Jacob’s residing with Father. Father recently filed for Legal Custody of Jacob on 5/29/2018. Mother learned of this from this CASA on 6/4/2018.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED:

4/5/2018—GAL—email
4/6/2018—Mother—email to arrange initial home visit
4/6/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
4/6/2018—GAL—email
4/9/2018—GAL—email
4/9/2018—Child Protection Specialist—phone call
4/10/2018—Jacob, Mother, Father—home visit at Mother’s home
4/11/2018—Child Protection specialist and GAL—email report on home visit
4/13/2018—Jacob’s Doctor’s office—phone call for medical records
4/13/2018—Paternal Grandmother—phone call to arrange home visit
4/13/2018—Jacob’s Doctor’s office and Fairview Hospital—office visits to request medical records
4/16/2018—Paternal Grandmother—phone call
4/16/2018—Jacob, Father, Paternal Grandmother, Father’s Brother—home visit at Father’s home
4/16/2018—Mother—phone call
4/16/2018—Child Protection Specialist and GAL—email to report on home visit at Father’s home
4/17/2018—Child Protection Specialist—phone call
4/17/2018—Mother, Jacob’s half-Sister, and half-Brother—home visit to Mother’s home
4/20/2018—Child Protection Specialist and GAL—email
4/20/2018—Mother—voice mail
4/23/2018—Paternal Grandmother—phone call
4/23/2018—Child Protection Specialist and GAL—email
4/25/2018—Child Protection Specialist—phone call
4/26/2018—Mother and Father—home visit to Mother’s home
4/26/2018—Child Protection Specialist and GAL—email
4/27/2018—Cleveland Clinic—regular mail; phone call; fax
4/27/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
4/27/2018—Maternal Grandmother—voice mail and phone call
4/30/2018—Mother—phone message and phone call
4/30/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
5/1/2018—Maternal Grandmother—home visit
5/1/2018—Mother—text and phone call
5/1/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
5/1/2018—Child Protection Specialist and GAL—email
5/2/2018—Jacob, Mother, Father, half-Siblings, Mother’s half-Sister, and Child Protection Specialist—home visit at Mother’s home
5/7/2018—Preliminary Court Hearing
5/7/2018—iCase research on Mother’s previous Neglect case
5/7/2018—Child Protection Specialist and CCDCFs supervisor—email
5/10/2018—Mother, Jacob, Father, half-Siblings, Father’s Sister, adult male friend of Mother, and GAL—home visit at Mother’s home
5/10/2018—Father—phone call
5/11/2018—Cleveland Clinic—phone call
5/11/2018—Mother—phone call
5/11/2018—Father—text message and phone call
5/13/2018—Father—text messages

5/14/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
5/15/2018—GAL—email
5/15/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
5/15/2018—Jacob, Father, Paternal Grandmother, and GAL—home visit at Father’s home
5/15/2018—Child Protection Specialist—text message and emails
5/16/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
5/17/2018—Mother—voice mail (call unreturned)
5/17/2018—Mother and Father—regular mail with information about free furniture
5/18/2018—Mother—voice mail (call unreturned)
5/18/2018—Father—text messages
5/19/2018—Cleveland Clinic—Jacob’s medical records received in regular mail
5/20/2018—Father—text messages
5/21 and 5/22/2018—Father of Jacob’s 8-year-old Brother—phone calls; unable to leave message
5/21/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
5/23/2018—Jacob, Father, paternal Grandmother, Father’s younger Sister, Jacob’s half-Sister, Child Protection Specialist—home visit at Father’s home
5/24/2018—Child Protection Specialist and GAL—email
5/24/2018—Father—phone call
5/25/2018—Father—phone call
5/28/2018—Mother—voice mail (call unreturned)
5/29/2018—Mother—home visit attempt; voicemail
5/29/2018—Father—text message and phone call
5/29/2018—Jacob, Father, Jacob’s half-Sister, Father’s younger Brother—home visit at Father’s home
5/29/2018—Mother—phone call
5/29/2018—Child Protection Specialist—voicemail; text messages; phone call
5/30/2018—Mother—voicemail to arrange visit (call unreturned)
5/31/2018—Child Protection Specialist and GAL—email regarding Father’s motion for Custody and dates/events found in medical records
5/31/2018—Child Protection Specialist—email
6/1/2018 and 6/3/2018—Father—attempted calls (voicemail unavailable)
6/4/18—Mother—phone call requesting visit and checking on Jacob’s medical appointment
6/4/2018—Child Protection Specialist—text messages and phone call to share recent exchanges with family members
6/4/2018—Father—text messages regarding home visit
6/4/2018—Paternal Grandmother and Father’s Sister—home visit

RECORDS/DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:

Complaint
Contact information
CCDCFS Case Plan
Medical Records for Jacob Mallory—birth 1/1/2017 through 4/9/2018
Partial case records for Mother’s previous Neglect Complaint
Father’s Motion for Legal Custody of Jacob
Court Correspondence

CHILD (REN)’S WELL BEING:

Jacob is a healthy 18-month-old child who is meeting most of his developmental milestones according to indicators published by the Centers for Disease Control. (This CASA provided Father with this information and also plans to provide Mother with the same.) This CASA has occasionally observed mild signs of upper respiratory congestion (nasal discharge and slight cough), but Jacob has not required any visits to his physician for respiratory or other illness, nor has he shown symptoms at the most recent home visit. Diagnoses included in his 15-month checkup were delayed vaccinations, mild intermittent asthma, infantile eczema, and exposure to second hand tobacco smoke. This CASA has observed no signs of eczema during any visit.

Jacob was born at 37 weeks and 5 days, weighing 7 lbs., 5 ozs. He tested positive at birth for marijuana. He was circumcised, received his first Hepatitis B vaccination, and his general condition was described as normal. CCDCFS was contacted due to his positive marijuana test and Mother's history of substance abuse. However, he was discharged and sent home with Mother and Father.

Jacob was examined by his pediatrician for his newborn check on 12/9/2016 (with physician noting "high risk social situation") and again on 12/19/2016 for another well-exam, with no unusual findings. He was seen again for a 2-month checkup on 2/7/2017; he completed several immunizations and was noted to have mild eczema on his face, mild cradle cap, and exposure to second hand smoke.

Jacob has been seen in the Emergency Department (ED) on 3 occasions and admitted to the hospital on 2 of these occasions for respiratory issues as follows:

- 2/20/2017: for cough and nasal congestion; diagnosed with Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and bronchiolitis; admitted overnight and discharged 2/21/2017
- 1/29/2018: for fever, cough, and nasal congestion; not admitted; diagnosed with mild intermittent reactive airway disease with acute exacerbation [Note: "Reactive airway disease" is a general term for respiratory conditions that include asthma.]
- 2/27/2018: for cough and fever; diagnosed with Influenza A; transferred from Lutheran Hospital ED to Fairview Hospital and admitted for pediatric observation due to chest x-ray results "consistent with" pneumonia. His clinical picture was noted as "not consistent with pneumonia" and he was discharged to return home on 2/28/2018 with a note stating "He will see his pediatrician in 1-2 days after discharge for close follow-up."

Visits to Jacob's pediatrician for various respiratory symptoms, including cough, congestion, and wheezing, took place as follows:

- 5/11/2017: diagnosed with viral upper respiratory infection with cough
- 5/23/2017: diagnosed with mild intermittent asthma with acute exacerbation
- 9/1/2017: diagnosed with viral upper respiratory infection with cough

Exposure to second hand smoke, and physician's encouragement to Mother to undertake smoking cessation, was noted on 3 occasions: 2/7/2017, 5/23/2017, 4/9/2018. This CASA has observed an opened pack of cigarettes on a small table in Mother's home on one occasion.

Medical records indicate 5 occasions of missed appointments or failure to schedule recommended appointments for illness follow up, which took place as follows:

- 4/10/2017: scheduled 4-month visit—missed (reminded on 2/22/2017)
- 6/7/2017: scheduled 6-month visit—missed (return to office noted on 5/11/2017; reminded on 5/23/2017 to keep 6-month check-up appointment)

- 1/29/2018: family counseled regarding lab and radiology results and suspected diagnosis, with a recommended “need for follow up”—no record of appointment
- 2/28/2018: hospital discharge summary indicates Jacob “will see his pediatrician in 1-2 days after discharge for close follow-up”—no record of appointment
- 3/21/2018: scheduled follow-up appointment—missed

Jacob started walking independently about 2 months ago. He climbs stairs on all fours and is starting to climb them walking upright. This CASA observed him climbing up stairs from the main floor to the 2nd floor in Mother’s home and in Father’s home. This is a potential safety hazard since there are occasional times when he is not under direct, close supervision.

Jacob has a strong bond with Father, often going to him to be held and picked up. He readily sits in Father’s lap and falls asleep on Father’s shoulder. This CASA also has observed Jacob readily accepting affectionate verbal and physical interaction with all the other members of Father’s household and one close associate of the family. Jacob is usually mildly wary when this CASA visits, but accepts conversation, playing, and lap-sitting after a few minutes, as long as Mother or Father is nearby. This CASA has observed, when presented with a choice between going to Mother or Father for comfort or play, Jacob more often chooses Father. Paternal Grandmother reports that Jacob is quick to have tantrums when he does not get something he wants, even banging his head on the floor.

This CASA has not had an opportunity to observe Jacob while spending lengthy time with his half-Siblings. However, both older children (8 and 6 years old) have interacted kindly with Jacob on the brief occasions observed at Mother’s home, with both half-Siblings and at Father’s home with his half-Sister.

When Jacob has resided or visited with Mother, he has slept in a “Pack ‘n’ Play” playpen placed either in Mother’s bedroom or in the dining room area when Mother sleeps on the sofa in the adjacent living room. During the time that Jacob has been residing with Father, and previously when Jacob stayed with Paternal Grandmother on weekends, Jacob shared Paternal Grandmother’s bed. Father is currently in the process of setting up a bedroom space for himself and Jacob in the basement area of his home. There is a toddler bed, but no dresser or shelves or closet to accommodate Jacob’s clothing, toys, diapers, and other personal belongings. This CASA has observed few toys or books in Mother’s or Father’s home, except a miniature power-wheel car recently purchased for him by Father. Paternal Grandmother reported to this CASA that the pad in the playpen at Mother’s home was removed by Mother’s Sister.

Both of the homes where Jacob has resided have been found to be cluttered with overflowing trash, food containers, laundry/clothing on the floors and on various staircases. The kitchen stoves are in need of cleaning, and the floors are unvacuumed or unwashed, but at this time Jacob has experienced no apparent ill effects from moving about in either of these homes.

CHILD(REN)’S CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT/STATUS:

Not applicable. Jacob is 18 months old.

MOTHER:

Mother shares her townhouse-style apartment administered by the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority with her middle two children: a son, 8 years old, who has just completed 3rd grade; and a daughter, 6-years-old, who has just completed kindergarten. The oldest child visits his father on weekends and during summer

vacation. The daughter's father is deceased. The daughter occasionally visits and sometimes stays overnight at her Maternal Grandmother's home, where she also has an opportunity to visit and play with her two first cousins. Maternal Grandmother told this CASA that she would like to help Mother more with Jacob's care, but she is unable to do so because she cannot lift him due to back problems. Maternal Grandmother also has a 10-year-old son who has experienced behavioral issues related to his diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Jacob is Mother's fifth child of 5 pregnancies. Her two oldest children, a son, 14 years old, and a daughter, 12 years old, reside with their father who has Legal Custody of them following a Neglect and Dependency Complaint filed against Mother in 2007. Mother is in arrears for child support for these children and has told this CASA that a payment arrangement has been worked out; a hearing on this matter was scheduled on 5/30/2018, but Mother failed to appear for it. Mother reported to this CASA that visitation with these children has been difficult, because their father has not cooperated with Mother; however, Mother has stated that she is not pursuing visitation rights at this time because of other on-going issues in her life.

Mother is 29 years old. She dropped out of school in 8th grade due to her first pregnancy and gave birth to her first child at age 14. Maternal Grandmother reported to this CASA that Mother was sexually assaulted at about age 7, perpetrated by Mother's Great-Grandmother's Boyfriend. According to Maternal Grandmother, Mother received therapy in the past for this trauma, but none for at least the past 10 years; Mother also dislikes talking about this trauma. Maternal Grandmother states that Jacob's Father is aware of Mother's past trauma. The perpetrator is incarcerated.

Mother has reported to this CASA that her income includes child support for her 8-year-old son, of about \$23 every 2 weeks, "food stamps" of \$649 monthly, and WIC food benefits. Her rent is \$25 per month, including utilities. Her cell phone bill and the child support she owes are her only other regular expenses besides rent. She and her children have Medicaid health insurance via United HealthCare. She does not own a vehicle; she uses public transportation or relies on Father, Maternal Grandmother at times, and friends. She recently acquired a bicycle.

Mother states that Maternal Grandmother takes her 6-year-old daughter for weekend visits, but not Jacob. Mother has named Jacob's Godmother as her best friend and a strong source of support. Mother also has a half-Sister with whom she has a close relationship, according to Paternal Grandmother. This CASA also met a male friend of Mother's at her home, whom Mother also described as her best friend; he and his mother are former neighbors from a previous residence of Mother's. Mother and Father have been in a long-term relationship for more than 4 years, living together for much of that time in Mother's current home. However, Father moved out and returned to his own home with Paternal Grandmother in mid-April, 2018. Mother has stated that there was no specific reason for their separation, that there was no major argument and "nothing physical," but that she "needs some space." Mother states that there are no other persons besides Father and the friends noted-above, whom she can rely upon for financial, emotional, or child care support for Jacob.

Mother took Jacob to the hospital Emergency Departments for all his illnesses and completed well-child checks in early infancy, made and completed his 15-month appointment, and made his appointment for his 18-month checkup. This CASA has observed Mother holding and talking to Jacob affectionately and attending to his basic needs for comfort, food, and safety. Father and Paternal Grandmother report that Mother is not able to cope successfully with Jacob's crying when Father leaves him and that she requests for Father to take him when this occurs.

Mother was hired in May 2018 by a laser tag facility to assist customers there. Her hours are afternoons and evenings on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, but there are sometimes additional hours. She has acquired a bicycle for transportation to her job. She has informally arranged for her 6-year-old daughter to be cared for by Maternal Grandmother when she is at work; this CASA has learned that this 6-year-old also stays at Father's home when she requests to go there.

Maternal Grandmother's home is a single-family dwelling administered by CMHA; this CASA observed the home to be clean and tidy and the yard spacious and neatly maintained. Mother's 8-year-old son spends weekends and vacations with his father. Mother has accepted Jacob's staying at his Father's home when she is working, but she has complained to Father that he is not letting her see Jacob at other times. (Father denies this; see below.)

Mother told this CASA on 5/29/2018 that she is actively seeking additional work to help her meet child support requirements. Mother has also reported that she wants to obtain her GED, which would start in August 2018.

Maternal Grandmother told this CASA that she does not think Mother is continuing to use marijuana. Father states that Mother is using it, but he does not believe it interferes with her ability to care for her children. Mother recently submitted to a urine screen. The results are unknown to this CASA, but Mother reportedly told the Child Protection Specialist that "it's going to be dirty." Mother was scheduled for a mental health assessment and a drug evaluation through OhioGuidestone on 5/25/2018, but she canceled it due to her work schedule; this CASA was informed by the Child Protection Specialist that it has been rescheduled for 6/11/2018.

This CASA found Mother asleep in mid-afternoon with her 6-year-old and her 8-year-old present, but not with Jacob in her care. Father states that Mother often sleeps well into the afternoon. Father states that since he moved out of Mother's home, he has tried to bring Jacob to spend time with Mother without Father. When Jacob cried due to Father's departure, Mother called Father to come get Jacob. Father has not left Jacob alone with Mother since mid-April when Father moved out of Mother's home.

This CASA communicated successfully by phone and in person with Mother at the beginning of this case. However, this CASA has encountered decreased communication from Mother for unknown reasons, evidenced by Mother's failure to answer or to respond to calls on at least 4 occasions, especially noted following a home visit on 5/2/2018. Mother's responses to this CASA's questions are frequently incomplete or evasive. This CASA has asked Mother to meet and to discuss any issues that may be upsetting Mother and interfering with mutual cooperation; Mother has denied any problem, stating that she did not receive this CASA's messages. This CASA has attempted to get Mother to talk about stresses she is experiencing due to very young parenthood, difficulty maintaining her relationship with her oldest two children, being a single mother to three young children, financial pressures of low income and child support responsibilities, an unstable relationship with Jacob's Father, lack of personal transportation to go to work and school and visit her children, no consistent sources of support and help, and the current CCDCFS Complaint against her. Mother has minimized these stressors, declines discussion, and prior to this Complaint had not made attempts to rectify Jacob's lack of regular well-child care and delayed immunizations or to seek mental health care to help her cope with her past trauma and present stress. Mother shows signs of possible depression including excessive sleeping and irritability; there is a family history of bipolar disorder, but Mother has not been evaluated or diagnosed.

Mother recently accused Father of physically harming her on two occasions, once in May 2018 and the other in summer 2017. She has not pressed charges for either of these alleged incidents. This CASA has not been able to reach Mother to discuss these incidents further. Mother has never accused Father of physical violence against Jacob. She did accuse Father of “backhanding” her 8-year-old son.

FATHER (S):

Father is 29 years old. Jacob is his second child. Father has a 7-year-old daughter, who lives with her mother (a former girlfriend), but visits Father frequently. Father and Jacob have been observed on every visit by this CASA to have a close and loving relationship, evidenced by Jacob readily going to Father for play, care, security, and comfort. This CASA has observed Father changing Jacob’s diaper and retrieving Jacob from climbing up a staircase. Father has repeatedly told this CASA that he is completely willing and able to provide full care for Jacob. He filed for Legal Custody on 5/29/2018.

Father shared Mother’s home during their relationship of about 4 years until he moved out, taking Jacob with him, in mid-April 2018, back to his current home owned by his Mother, Jacob’s Paternal Grandmother. Father stated that his reason for moving out was that he was tired of arguing with Mother. Father states that he has established regular sleep, nap, and mealtimes for Jacob; he is certain that Mother will not maintain these schedules. Father is also concerned about the presence of other people in and out of Mother’s home and that Mother will not provide safe supervision of Jacob due to her sleeping during the day. Father denies Mother’s claims that he is keeping Jacob from her, and he has said that she can see Jacob any time, but he expects Mother to find transportation other than himself for these visits. Father does not own a vehicle, but he has ready access to one of Paternal Grandmother’s two vehicles. Father has not made appointments for Jacob’s medical care, but he has participated in Emergency Department visits and well-child checkups. According to Paternal Grandmother, Father arranged for a developmental assessment for Jacob at Father’s home by Help Me Grow, scheduled on or about 6/5/2018.

Father’s support system includes Paternal Grandmother; a 25-year-old Sister, who has multiple developmental disabilities; an 18-year-old Sister; and a 15-year-old Brother. Father reports a positive relationship with the mother of his daughter and states that although there is no legally ordered visitation agreement, he and the mother have had no problems in shared parenting of his daughter. Mother has acknowledged that Paternal Grandmother provides a large measure of support, readily able and willing to care for Jacob at her home overnight most weekends prior to early April, when Paternal Grandmother had surgery on a finger and arm related to her chronic medical condition and has not been able to provide care as frequently and intensively as she has done in the past.

Father has an appropriate and warm relationship with Mother’s 6-year-old daughter, who considers him her father and calls him “Daddy.” Father has permitted her to stay at his home on many occasions. She has asked Father to let her stay with him for the summer. This CASA observed her interacting with him and with Paternal Grandmother as members of her family. Father’s relationship with Mother’s 8-year-old son is not as close, but they get along and Father defers to Mother or to his father for disciplinary issues.

Father’s employment history is not well known to this CASA. Paternal Grandmother informed this CASA that Father is well trained for auto body work, but that he dislikes this work. She has commented that he “doesn’t like to work.” In the last three months, Father reports that he has been employed 2-3 nights per week at a laser

shipment facility. Most recently, he was hired for a full-time daytime job managing a pop-up hotdog stand. He was supposed to begin work on 5/28/2018, but that has been postponed with his employer's approval to 6/6/2018 due to the need for arranging day care. Father reported in early April to this CASA that he has not been able to work at a former job because of back injuries he experienced that were not related to work. Father's income is unknown to this CASA. He is reportedly requesting day care vouchers for Jacob's care since family members are not able to provide this on a full-time, regular basis.

Father denies any past or current use of illegal drugs. He is not a smoker. Father presented his version of Mother's claim of alleged physical assault to this CASA and Child Protection Specialist. He denies a violent assault. There has been no follow-up by Mother to these allegations. Paternal Grandmother voiced concerns about Father showing signs of depression that may have basis in the weight of responsibilities he experiences for parenting his son and sharing parenting of his daughter; concerns for the care of Mother's 6-year-old daughter; assisting with the care of his younger Sister with disabilities; and concerns for Paternal Grandmother as she recovers from surgery and manages her chronic medical conditions.

Prior to this Complaint, Father had not made any attempt to rectify Jacob's missed well-child medical care or to catch up with delayed immunizations. He has told this CASA that he would like to switch Jacob's regular medical care to a physician closer to his home after Jacob's 18-month checkup on 6/4/2018. He has verbalized understanding that if he is going to have custody of Jacob, then he must take primary responsibility for all of Jacob's medical care and developmental needs.

CASE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

- **Mother to complete a psychological evaluation.** Mother was scheduled for this evaluation on 5/25/2018. She canceled it due to her work schedule. This CASA has no information on a rescheduled date.
- **Mother to complete a drug and alcohol assessment and attend and complete any recommended treatment.** This was scheduled for 5/25/2018 with psychological evaluation. See note just above.
- **Mother to provide scheduled and random drug screens.** Mother completed a urine test, but the results are unknown at this writing. Mother told Child Protection Specialist, "I'm going to be dirty" [i.e., positive for drugs].
- **Mother and Father to ensure child(ren) see a doctor and/or appropriate medical provider for well-child care, illness, injury, or any other time such care is appropriate.** Mother and Father took Jacob to see his pediatrician for a well-child visit on 4/9/2018. He received 5 immunizations. Parents state that it is their understanding that Jacob is now up to date on immunizations. Jacob's 18-month well-child checkup is scheduled for 6/4/2018. He has had no illnesses or injuries requiring medical attention since his hospitalization on 2/27/2018.
- **Mother and Father to ensure child sees a dentist at least annually and additionally as needed.** There is no known appointment for an initial dental evaluation.

THE WISHES OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN:

Jacob is 18-months-old and unable to vocally express his wishes.

SUMMARY:

Jacob's basic needs are being met while he resides in his Father's home, except for a sleeping space appropriate to his age. Mother wants to see Jacob more often than she does at this time, but she has not voiced objection to the current living arrangement. Father has filed a motion for Legal Custody. It is not known whether Mother

will contest this motion. Mother's work schedule requires her to be out of the home at least 3 evenings per week, and Father's expected work schedule will require him to be out of the home 5 days per week. There is no current plan for regular, safe and reliable child care. Father has demonstrated the ability and willingness to provide appropriate care for Jacob. Both Parents participated in Jacob's 15-month checkup, and both plan to take him to his 18-month checkup. Mother has demonstrated affection and wishes to spend time with Jacob, but she has not insisted on having Jacob reside with her. She also has a history of a previous Neglect Complaint for her two oldest children, due in part to substance abuse, and lost custody of these children to their father. She has not ceased her use of illegal recreational drugs, which led in part to the current Complaint. This CASA has had difficulty in the last month in communicating with Mother, so it is uncertain how Mother plans to proceed in meeting the requirements of the case plan or in continuing to meet her other children's needs while addressing her own.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the above mentioned information, this CASA makes the following recommendations in the child's best interests:

CUSTODY: Jacob should be placed with Father and in Temporary Custody of CCDCFS to ensure that Father is consistently compliant with meeting all of Jacob's medical and dental needs; has ensured a safe living and sleeping space for Jacob, appropriate accommodations for Jacob's clothing, supplies, toys, and other personal belongings, and appropriate child care as needed; and that Father has completed classes and counseling as noted below and is consistently following all recommendations and treatments.

PLACEMENT: Jacob should continue to reside with Father.

VISITATION: Mother is to complete psychological and drug evaluations; consistently follow through with any treatment(s) and recommendations; and have negative scheduled and/or random drug screens before she may have unsupervised visitation with Jacob.

SERVICES FOR CHILD: Father has scheduled for Help Me Grow on or about 6/5/2018 to evaluate whether Jacob's cognitive, social, language, and physical development are appropriate for his age, especially in light of his exposure to marijuana in utero. Father will follow through with any recommendations that may be made for follow-up treatment, services, and education. Safe and appropriate child care with a licensed provider will be arranged; this CASA provided Father with contact information for a licensed child care facility near Father's home and that facility's weekly fee for service.

SERVICES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:

Mother: Psychological evaluation and treatment as recommended; drug evaluation and treatment as recommended; engage in a smoking cessation program; parenting classes; finance management classes; job counseling; engage in a GED program. Resources for obtaining low-cost or free furniture was provided by this CASA to Mother.

Father: Parenting classes, mental health assessment for possible depression, with counseling/therapy as recommended; finance management classes; job counseling. Resources for obtaining low-cost or free furniture was provided by this CASA to Father.

OTHER CONCERNS: Mother's continued drug use, irregular work schedule, lack of a reliable plan for child care during her work hours, and questionable supervision when Mother is sleeping during the day raise concerns about whether Mother is able to provide safe care for the children currently residing with her.

The CASA reserves the right to orally amend this report during the hearing.

Respectfully Submitted,

CASA's First and Last Name, Court Appointed Special Advocate

Reviewed By: _____
First Last Name, Volunteer Coordinator

Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County

First Last Name
Program Director

Date: / /20

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING A COURT REPORT FOR A REVIEW HEARING

Remove all questions in each section. The questions are to guide you on the information that should be presented in each section. Some questions may not apply to your case. Use complete sentences. This report becomes part of the official Court case file. Give full factual details and observations, no opinions.

****Inform the Court of what facts you've gathered since the last Court report and what the current progress is.**

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS JUVENILE DIVISION CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF:)
Child's First Last Name D.O.B. / /20) Case No: AD
Child's First Last Name D.O.B. / /20) Case No: AD
)
) JUDGE: First Last Name
) MAGISTRATE: First Last Name
)
) **COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL**
) **ADVOCATE (CASA) COURT REPORT**

Now comes CASAs First Last Name as Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), for the above-captioned, minor child/children and hereby submits the following CASA Report and Recommendation.

CASE (LEGAL) HISTORY:

Most of the information in this section will remain the same from your previous report. Please update any hearings that occurred and what the outcome of each hearing was.

- What was the date of the Trial, Adjudication, and/or Disposition?
- What were the outcome of these hearings? Please include information that was amended from the Amended Complaint.
- Has CCDCFs filed a Motion to Terminate or Extend Protective Supervision (or Temporary Custody)? If so, what date was that Motion filed?
- What is the scheduled date of the Review Hearing?

CHILD (REN)'S PLACEMENT:

In this section, write about each placement that the child has been in since the last Court report was filed. Include the name of the placement, date the child entered the placement and reason for moving.

- Write the physical address of updated placement. (unless it's a foster home-confidential)
- Who are the children residing with?

- Who are the adults in the home and what is their level of appropriateness?
- Mention every adult in the home and anyone the child spends significant time with including grandparents, relatives, significant others, etc.
- Have those people had background checks if they are in the home?
- What is the history of those relationships?
- Describe the conditions of the home?
- Does the child have own room or do they share?
- Describe home: apartment complex, single home, double?
- What is the activity like; are there a lot of people coming in and out of the home?
- If child is in foster care, how is child adjusting?

If the child hasn't moved, update this section to incorporate what occurred at the most recent home visits.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED:

Please remove activities that were stated in your previously filed Court report.

- Who have you contacted since the ***last Court report was filed?***
- List your contacts with the important adults in the child's life (parent(s), caregivers, relatives, parents' significant others, DCFS, teachers, doctors, therapists, probation officers, other service providers, law enforcement, etc.)
- What have you done on the case since the last hearing?
- List the activity and the dates since the last report (ex. hearings, home/school visits, observed visitations, meetings, reviews, etc.)

RECORDS/DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:

Be sure to include ALL documents reviewed throughout the entirety of the case. Also, make sure to add any additional documents reviewed since your last Court report.

- List what records you have reviewed, including anything CASA staff provided you (example, Court records, DCFS records, school, and background checks, medical, mental health, drug/alcohol, police, criminal, civil, etc.).

CHILD (REN)'S WELL BEING:

This section needs to be updated for each child. Overall, how is the child doing since your last Court report? The following are suggested questions, answer for each child on the case:

- Are the child's basic needs being met?
- How is child's health? Immunizations up to date? Are they on medications? If so, what kind and why?
- Are they developmentally on target per pediatrician?
- Do parents/caregiver follow recommendations of pediatrician if applicable?
- Any mental health, medical, dental, or safety concerns?
- Is child in therapy...where, why, frequency?
- Does child appear to be safe in current environment?

- Are children visiting parents, siblings, and relatives?
- Does the child have any particular needs...Medication, clothing, school supplies, etc.?
- Does the child appear to be happy and are the basic needs being met?
- With whom does the child socialize, friends in the neighborhood, school? Foster siblings?
- What type of activities does the child engage in? Church, girl/boy scouts, sports?

CHILD(REN)'S CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT/STATUS:

This section needs to be updated for each child. Overall, what has changed since your last Court report? The following are suggested questions, answer for each child on the case:

- Where is the child attending school? Did the child change schools?
- What grade is the child in?
- Is child age appropriate for that grade?
- What are the child's grades? If the child is in a new grade, what were the child's grades from the previous academic year?
- How is the child's attendance? If the child is in a new grade, what was the child's attendance from the previous academic year?
- Does the child display any behavior problems? If so, disciplinary actions?
- Is the child in regular or special education? Do they have an IEP?
- How many school changes have occurred?
- Is the child in any extra-curricular activities?
- Any additional needs? (Example-Tutoring)

MOTHER:

Overall, please describe what has changed with Mother and her situation since your last Court report. Please remember that the goal of these cases is reunification, so you want to update the Court on how Mother is doing since the last court hearing. The following are suggested questions:

- Describe observations of the interactions/visitations.
- How is Mother's relationship with her children?
- Has Mother moved residences? If so, what is the appropriateness of the residence?
- Does Mother have employment? If so, where is she employed?
- Is Mother involved in any services/treatment as of now? Is she compliant?
- Please list any other issues.

FATHER (S):

Overall, please describe what has changed with Father and his situation since your last Court report. The following are suggested questions:

- Describe observations of the interactions/visitations.
- How is Father's relationship with his children?
- Has Father moved residences? If so, what is the appropriateness of the residence?
- Does Father have employment? If so, where is he employed?
- Is Father involved in any services/treatment as of now? Is he compliant?

- Even if there has been no contact with Father, is there any information in the complaint that can be listed here?
- Please list any other issues.

LEGAL CUSTODIAN/MAIN CAREGIVER:

If the child is not placed with Mother or Father, please update your Court report to reflect how the child is doing with his/her legal custodian/main caregiver. The following are suggested questions:

- Describe observations of the interactions/visitations.
- How is the caregiver’s relationship with the child(ren)?
- How are the children doing in the caregiver’s care?
- Please list any issues related to this placement.

CASE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

Please update the Court on whether or not Mother and Father have been compliant with completing their CCDCFS case plan objectives.

- Please state what the main case plan objectives are for both parents.
- Describe the services and what progress has been made.
- Are parents/caregivers participating, at what level? If not, why, are there obstacles, such as transportation, money, etc.?
- Do parents/caregivers understand what is expected from them?
- Are they demonstrating what they have learned? How so?
- Does the family need additional resources that haven’t been addressed?

THE WISHES OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN:

- What would the child like to see happen? (even if it is not what the CASA would recommend as the child's best interests)
- Answer these questions for each child on the case.
- How you ascertain their wishes will be different for every child.
- Always consider age, developmental level, psychological well-being, etc.

SUMMARY:

Summarize key facts that you presented throughout the Court report. This section should NOT include any new information that wasn’t stated above.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations should be supported by the facts throughout the Court report.

Based on the above mentioned information, this CASA makes the following recommendations in the child’s best interests:

CUSTODY:

- Who should have the Legal Custody (responsibility) for the child?

- Should CDCFS remain involved or should Protective Supervision or Temporary Custody be terminated?

PLACEMENT:

- Where should the child physically reside?

VISITATION:

- Should there be visitation with anyone living outside the home? If so, supervised or unsupervised, etc.?

SERVICES FOR CHILD:

- What services does the child need that maybe haven't been addressed?

SERVICES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:

- What services do the parents/caregivers need, do they need to continue working on their case plan objectives? Do they need additional resources/services that haven't been addressed?

OTHER CONCERNS: Anything else of concern that does not fit into any category above.

The CASA reserves the right to orally amend this report during the hearing.

Respectfully Submitted,

CASA's First and Last Name, Court Appointed Special Advocate

Reviewed By: _____
First Last Name, Volunteer Coordinator

Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County

First Last Name
Program Director

Date: / /20

Continuing Education Training and FAQ Sheet

What is continuing education training? CASAs shall continue to expand their knowledge and understanding of the needs of and resources available for the families they serve; the laws, rules, and regulations governing the organizations that serve this population; and strategies and approaches to represent the best interests of the children they serve. It is the responsibility of the CASA to meet their annual requirements. CASAs are required to complete a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing education training each calendar year to meet the requirements of the National CASA Association. Training credit can be earned through a variety of different delivery methods, including attending workshops, watching videos, and reading articles related to your role as a CASA.

When does the twelve (12) hour requirement begin? It begins right away. In the first year, completion of the new CASA pre-service training will meet the twelve (12) hour requirement for that year.

How do I submit my training hours? If you attend a training that is offered by Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County, you must sign in upon arriving and state the time you arrived. If you attend a training hosted by another organization, document the training in your monthly update in the appropriate section. ***CASAs shall provide proof of attendance by providing a copy of a certificate of completion, written validation from the organization, if possible, or use of the Continuing Education Verification Form (Appendix J). This documentation should be attached to your monthly update.***

Do I have to attend the trainings offered by Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County? None of our trainings are mandatory unless explicitly stated. You are more than welcome and encouraged to attend.

If I do not have to attend your trainings, then what are my other options? There are countless ways to earn your hours. Some examples of what other volunteers have done are: books, attending conferences, and online training. We encourage your creativity and want you to enjoy your training! If you do self-study (example - a book or podcast) you do need to complete the Self-Study Form (Appendix I), which can be sent in with your monthly update. ***Keep in mind - only three (3) hours of self-study are allowed annually.***

If I take a class at a university or college, will those count toward training hours? Yes, but the program can only count the amount of hours you receive from the university and/or college. For example, a three (3) credit hour course equals three (3) training hours from the program. A copy of the college transcript is required, once the course has been completed to receive credit.

What happens if I do not fulfill my training requirements? The program reserves the right to terminate any CASA for lack of training. CASAs are encouraged to contact program staff if there is a problem meeting the annual requirement. CASAs on a leave of absence from their role, are still required to maintain twelve (12) hours of continuing education training annually. Supporting

documentation of attendance must be submitted to the program. Failure to meet the requirement while on a leave of absence will result in automatic dismissal.

Most Commonly Used Trainings

- Trainings offered by Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County – CASA of Cuyahoga County
- Trainings and conferences offered by the Ohio CASA/GAL Association or National CASA
- Two Days in May conference sponsored by the Ohio Attorney General’s Office
- Community speakers, forums, events and/or workshops
- Audio/video presentations are available by the National CASA Association on their website, www.casaforchildren.org, click on Advocacy Resources
- Books related to the CASA role – time awarded at one minute per page and an additional 30 minutes for a written summary of the book
- Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County offers training, visit www.adamhscc.org for the schedule
- Cuyahoga County Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI), visit <http://www.gpicuyahoga.org>, click on caregiver training, and then video training library

Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) and the North Central Ohio Regional Training Center (NCORTC)

NCORTC is the training center designated to administer training for public children service agency staff in Cuyahoga County. Guest registration is obtained by calling NCORTC at 216.881.5667. Guests must provide name, date and location of class they wish to attend and agency affiliation (CASA). For the training calendar visit <http://ocwtp.net/NCORTC.html> and click the trainees tab.

Additional Websites with Free Training

CASA of Arizona	www.azcourts.gov/casa/Home.aspx
Child Trauma Academy	www.childtraumaacademy.com
National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare	www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov
National Children’s Advocacy Center	www.nationalcac.org
National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections	www.nrcpfc.org
Teaching Tolerance	www.tolerance.org
UW School of Law Court Improvement Training Academy	www.uwcita.org
Institute for Family Violence Studies – FSU University of Social Work	www.familyvio.csw.fsu.edu



9300 Quincy Avenue, 3rd Floor ♦ Cleveland, Ohio 44106
 216.443.3377 ♦ cfadvocates.org

Self-Study Training Summary Form

Volunteer's Name:	Date:
Type of Self Study (book, podcast, etc.):	Title of self-study:
Length of self-study (time or number of pages):	Time spent completing this form:

1. Please summarize the content of the self-study:

2. List at least three things you have learned and discuss how you will utilize them as a CASA:

3. Please list any questions you have after completing this self-study:

4. Would you recommend this to other CASA Volunteers? Why or why not?

5. Please list any suggestions you have for training topics:

Reminder: Only 3 hours of self-study training are allowed annually.



9300 Quincy Avenue, 3rd Floor ♦ Cleveland, Ohio 44106
216.443.3377 ♦ cfadvocates.org

Continuing Education Verification Form

CASA: _____ Email: _____
Phone #: _____

Table with 3 columns: DATE, Title of Training & # of Hours, Contact Person & Phone #. The table contains 15 empty rows for data entry.

****Please use this form when you are unable to obtain documentation that you attended a training hosted by an outside organization****

Acknowledgement of Receipt of CASA Handbook

This is to certify that I have received a copy of the CASA Handbook.

I understand that the contents of the handbook may be changed from time to time, at the discretion of the program, and I will be notified of such changes. I also understand that the language in the handbook is not intended to create, and should not be interpreted as creating, a contract for a specific period of time. I understand that I have the right to terminate my relationship with CASA of Cuyahoga County at any time and for any reason, and that CASA of Cuyahoga County has the right to terminate the relationship at any time.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____