



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF TARRANT COUNTY

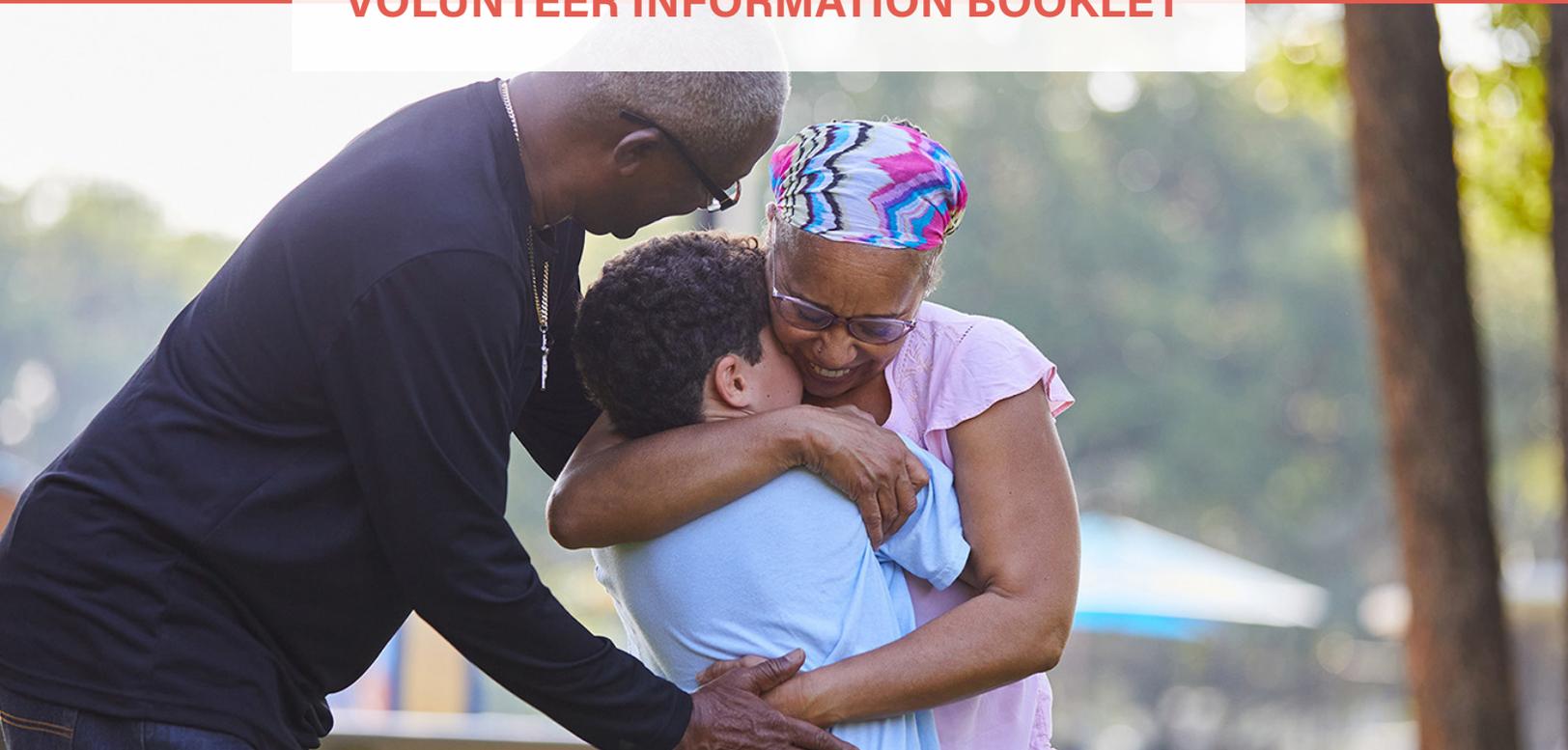
H O P E I S W H E R E

T H E  **I S.**

MISSION CASA of Tarrant County and its court-appointed volunteers advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children

VISION Provide a CASA volunteer to every child who needs one

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION BOOKLET



How It Starts

Child suffers abuse, neglect, or abandonment. DFPS is called. Abuse hotline: 1-800-252-5499

PHASE 01



Investigation

Local CPS investigates. Typically leads to one of three outcomes: abuse or neglect is ruled out due to lack of evidence; voluntary services are put into place; removal.

PHASE 02



Removal

CPS explores placement options such as a relative or friend to prevent a removal or they submit a referral to Our Community Our Kids to identify a licensed foster home.

PHASE 03



Advocate Assigned

CASA requests a judge approve the appointment of a CASA to the case. If approved, a CASA volunteer is matched to the case. Once assigned, the CASA begins their journey to advocate for the best interest of the child.

PHASE 04



Next Steps

Once placed, a case plan, family visitation, therapy, case management services and behavioral support all commence.

PHASE 05



Outcome

Reunification with parents or family
Adoption
Age Out (18+)

PHASE 06

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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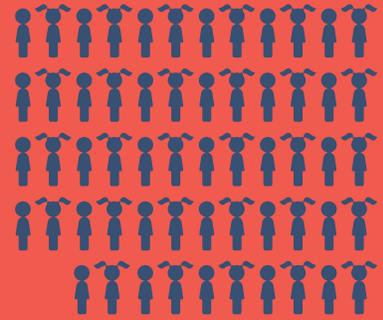
When home is no longer safe and a child must enter foster care, a judge may appoint a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer to guide that child to a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible.

1
PAID
CASA
STAFF



SUPPORTS
25
VOLUNTEERS

WHO
SERVE
UP TO
58
CHILDREN
PER YEAR



Every year, hundreds of Tarrant County children are legally removed from their homes in order to protect them from further injury.

As a child moves through the maze of the legal system, the CASA volunteer is often the most consistent person in that child's life.



Tarrant County has the
3RD HIGHEST
number of confirmed victims of
child abuse and/or neglect in Texas

5,332 CHILDREN
were confirmed child abuse
victims in 2023

Tarrant County has
THE HIGHEST
per capita child abuse rate of all
urban areas in Texas

In 2023,
499 CASA VOLUNTEERS
DONATED 47,150 HOURS
of their time and drove
315,149 MILES



The cost of action is far more affordable than the cost of inaction. Children who do not find a permanent home by age 18 are at increased risk for ongoing social challenges:

50% are in jail by the age of 23

25% become homeless

CASAs prevent these outcomes by helping children find permanent homes and reducing time children spend in foster care. By reducing time spent in foster care, in 2023 CASA saved Tarrant County taxpayers

\$2,000,000!

499
volunteers were assigned to
a case in 2023

498
children were removed from
their homes in 2023

45%
of children served are
between the ages 0 and 5

Children with a CASA volunteer in Tarrant County:



Have shorter lengths of stay in foster care (2 fewer weeks) compared to children without a CASA.



Are less likely to re-enter care once they find a permanent home.



Are more likely to pass all classes in school, less likely to have behavioral issues in school, and less likely to be expelled.

92%



of children with a CASA who left foster care in 2023 in Tarrant County found a permanent home (compared to 86% of children without a CASA)

957



Number of children who had a CASA in Tarrant County in 2023

Thanks to your longstanding generosity, 957 children in Tarrant County had a CASA volunteer in 2023.

67% of Tarrant County children in foster care who needed a CASA received one. Tarrant County children who had a CASA volunteer were more likely to find a permanent home than children without a CASA, all thanks to your support.

THE STEPS

TO BECOMING A CASA

- Learn more about CASA of Tarrant County
- Attend an Information Session
- Fill out and submit application
- Sign up for an interview
- Send in "Interview Paperwork" (7 pages)
- Send in photo of driver's license
- Send in photo against solid background
- Attend interview
- Pay \$27 background check and badge fee
- Complete fingerprints and background check
- Send in "Training Paperwork" (3 pages)
- Complete online pre-work prior to each training session
- Attend training
- In-person courtroom observation
- Get sworn in by a judge!
- Accept a CASA case!

Typically, swear-in takes place on the Friday after training ends, at 11:30am at the Family Law Center.

Depending on the month, training typically takes place on Monday and Thursday evenings.



QUALIFICATIONS

& REQUIREMENTS

Must be:

- 21+ years old
- Able to pass background check
- Flexible daytime schedule
- Fair, open-minded and comfortable working with children who have experienced trauma

Cannot be:

- A current foster parent, employee of CPS or OCOK, involved in a custody dispute or involved in a foster child's life who has an active case
- Convicted of a felony within the last 10 years or DUI/DWI within the last five years

Requirements:

- Complete 100% of initial training. (33 hours in length)
 - Maintain strict confidentiality.
 - Attend 12 hours of in-service training per year.
 - Commit to at least the completion of one case (approximately 12-24 months).
 - Keep the CASA program staff informed of all activities and confer with them monthly.
 - Maintain an up-to-date electronic case file in the OPTIMA database.
 - Destroy and discard any paper documentation at conclusion of case or volunteer time.
-

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a "typical" volunteer advocate like?

Volunteer advocates come from all walks of life, representing a variety of ethnic, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Approximately two-thirds of our volunteer advocates are employed full-time, some are college students, and some are retired. The one thing they have in common is the conviction that every child deserves a safe, loving, and permanent home.

What is the time commitment for being a volunteer advocate?

Each case is different. A CASA volunteer usually spends more time conducting research and interviews prior to the first court appearance. Once the initial investigation is complete, volunteers spend approximately 12-15 hours a month maintaining contacts and gathering information. The length of the case can vary, but typically the case will be between 12 to 18 months long.

Can I complete my volunteer requirements on my own schedule?

Yes! Volunteer requirements can be done on a flexible schedule. A lot of requirements entail phone calls, foster-home visits and meeting that can be scheduled according to your availability. Volunteers are required to visit the child(ren) face-to-face once per month.

What kind of support does a volunteer receive?

Volunteers have a Child Advocacy Specialist assigned to help them and work directly with them throughout their case.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
28	29 The CASA/GAL Volunteer Role 5:30pm – 8:30pm	30	1	2 The Well-Being of the Child 5:30pm – 8:30pm	3
5	6 Trauma, Resilience & Communication Skills 5:30pm – 8:30pm	7	8	9 Mental Health, Poverty & Confidentiality e-learning	10
12	13 Substance Abuse, Diversity & Disproportionality: 5:30pm – 8:30pm	14	15	16 Domestic Violence, Bias & Cultural Competence e-learning	17
19	20 Educational Advocacy, Older Youth & LGBTQ Youth 5:30pm – 8:30pm	21	22	23 Moving Forward as an Advocate 5:30pm – 8:30pm	24 Swear-in Meet & Greet 9:30am – 11:00am Swear-In 11:30am
26	27	28	29	30	31

*Six classes will be held in person in the CASA training room. The two highlighted classes are held online.

BEST INTEREST ADVOCACY



MONTHLY DUTIES

- Visit child(ren) face to face at least once per month.
- Contact parent (with attorney permission), OCOK Permanency Caseworker, Child Caregiver, and CASA Child Advocacy Specialist
- Establish and maintain communication with family members and fictive kin to create a network for the child
- Documentation

QUARTERLY DUTIES

- Attend court hearings 4-5x per year
- Connect with other involved parties (lawyers, teachers, therapists, doctors, etc.)

WAYS TO SUPPORT CASA OF TARRANT COUNTY

Foster children's lives are filled with chaos. New homes, new schools, and often separated from their siblings. Never knowing when things will get back to normal. But a CASA volunteer speaks up for them, advocating for their needs during the chaos.

Become a CASA! Sign up to attend an upcoming virtual information session to get started.



HOST AN INFORMATION SESSION

By hosting an information session at your place of employment, church, or civic group, staff members will come to you to speak about our volunteer opportunities. Listeners are left with in depth knowledge about the child abuse crisis in our communities, as well as various ways members can help.



HOST OR CONTRIBUTE TO A DONATION DRIVE

Host a drive or contribute items to provide new needs to the children we serve during our three annual donation drives: Infant & Toddler Drive in the Spring, Back to School Drive in the Fall, and Holiday Toy Drive in the Winter.



DONATE ONLINE

There are many ways to financially support CASA online. Creating a Facebook fundraiser is a great way to spread awareness with your network. You can also set up recurring donations through our website and support us year-round!



ENGAGE IN CORPORATE GIVING

Your gift to CASA of Tarrant County may have an opportunity to be doubled through an employer match program. Talk to your employer to see if your company matches employees' charitable gifts.



SPONSOR & PARTICIPATE IN OUR EVENTS

CASA has annual events that raise money for the organization. Sponsoring or participating at an event is a fun way to get your family and coworkers involved.



SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

Sign up to receive our newsletter on our newsletter, so you can stay up to date!

WHY CASA?

HEAR FROM OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

CYNTHIA THOMPSON

CASA Volunteer

"The most rewarding part about being a CASA is meeting the child that I am working with and seeing how motivated the members of his family are to make the changes necessary. The child I am working with is very happy and energetic. He knows that he is surrounded by the people who love him and are working to keep him safe."



HEARD FLOORE

CASA Volunteer

"CASA is an organization devoted to helping children change their lives into more healthy, sustainable choices -- but there are not enough of us to reach most of these children. In the history of mankind on this earth, our individual life spans make up a brief moment or two at best but the effect of those lives can last much longer."



ANDRINI HENDARTON

CASA Volunteer

"I believe it is important for the children to know there are people on their side, whose primary concerns are to care about their well-being. There might have been changes in their lives, but a CASA volunteer is a constant presence they can depend on."



CASA OF TARRANT COUNTY

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 817.877.5891

 [SPEAKUPFORACHILD.ORG](https://www.speakupforachild.org)

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