



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

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**CASA OF SOUTH-CENTRAL  
NEW JERSEY**

**THANKS FOR  
YOUR INTEREST  
IN CASA FOR  
CHILDREN**

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PRESENTED BY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES  
FOR CHILDREN OF CASA OF SOUTH-CENTRAL NEW  
JERSEY

# WHY IS CASA SO IMPORTANT?

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## Mission Statement

**CASA for Children of South-Central New Jersey advocates for children and youth in the foster care system to have their needs met and their rights protected. Our dedicated staff and well-trained volunteers connect each child in our care to resources that support their healthy growth and development, and advocate for the child's well-being and best interests.**

## Note

**All of the children in the CASA program have been removed from their families due to abuse and/or neglect and are in a foster placement.**

# ABOUT CASA

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- CASA is an acronym that stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate.
- Started in 1977 by a Family Court Judge in Seattle who needed more detailed, unbiased information about child abuse and neglect cases.
- His idea – train community volunteers as Court Appointed Special Advocates, assign each volunteer to one case and ask them to stay with the case until closed.
- CASA becomes National in 1982.
- CASA NJ started in 2000.
- All 21 counties in NJ are served by a local CASA program.

# WHAT IS A CASA?

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## “Court Appointed Special Advocate”

- A community volunteer assigned by a judge to one child abuse/neglect case **via a court order** to assist the judge and provide him/her with detailed, updated, unbiased information based on the child’s best interests.
- In an overburdened system, gives the child a one on one advocate who stays with the case for around 24 months. The ultimate goal is a permanent home.
- Connects each child to needed resources that support their healthy growth and development.



A close-up photograph of a man's face, wearing glasses and holding a magnifying glass over his eye. The image is dimly lit, with the magnifying glass highlighting the man's eye and the text overlaid on it.

## ROLE OF CASA VOLUNTEERS

**A court order gives the volunteer **DIRECT** access to all of the child's information to:**

- Collect information (directly from teachers, physicians, counselors...)
- Identify, locate and coordinate services
- Monitor services ordered by the court

# ROLE OF CASA VOLUNTEERS

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- Submit written reports of findings and recommendations to the court (with assistance from CASA staff)
- Attend court hearings in person
- Visit with the child at least once per month
- When possible, attend meetings to advocate for the child (school, DCF, etc.)



# CASA VOLUNTEERS DO NOT...

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- Negotiate between parties or lawyers.
- Have meetings with the Judge.
- Supervise the child.
- Buy the child gifts.
- Drive the child in their car.
- Invite the child to their home.



## EACH CASA IS ASSIGNED AN ADVOCATE SUPERVISOR

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- CASA staff that supports the advocates
- Available by phone, email, text or in person to discuss the case, offer additional perspectives and explore alternatives
- Act as a sounding board for ideas or frustrations
- Review and edit your court reports



# HOW EFFECTIVE IS CASA

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- Foster children with a CASA will spend 25% less time in out-of-home placement.
- Foster children with a CASA are more likely to succeed in school and have lower rates of delinquency.
- Foster children with a CASA are less likely to re-enter the foster care system.
- 99% of CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted by the court and become part of the court's order.
- CASA of South-Central Jersey's goal is to serve 500 children this year. We need more volunteers to help us reach this goal!!!!

# CASA VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

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- Flexibility to make private calls & attend quarterly court hearings – court hearings will always be in the county where you were sworn in
- 5-20 hours per month to work on your case
- 21 years of age
- Driver's license & car
- Basic computer skills
- Travel may be required - some foster homes are out of county



# GETTING STARTED

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- CONTACT US!!!!
- Sign up for an interview
- Complete online application including providing 4 references
- Interview – about 1 hour
- Complete background checks
- Complete 30 hours of training plus a 3-hour court observation (please visit our website for the training schedules)

# CONTACT US

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For more information on how you can become involved with CASA, please reach out to us:

E-mail Tekoa Capps:

[tcapps@casasnj.org](mailto:tcapps@casasnj.org)

For more information visit our website:

Click the “Volunteer Tab – Getting Started” to watch our 5-minute introductory video.

**Thank you!**