



Wood County Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a CASA/GAL?

A trained volunteer appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of a child in court. Children helped by a CASA/GAL are victims of dependency, neglect, and abuse.

What is the role of a CASA/GAL?

Provide a judge or magistrate with a carefully researched background of the child to help the Court make a sound decision about the child's future. Each case is as unique as the child involved. The CASA/GAL must determine if it is in the child's best interest to be with his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), in a foster home, or other placement, or be placed for adoption. The CASA/GAL makes recommendations on placement to the judge or magistrate and follows through on the case until it is resolved.

How does a CASA/GAL gather information about a case?

The CASA/GAL talks to the child, parents, family members, social workers, school officials and teachers, health care providers, and others who are knowledgeable about the child's history.

How does the role of a CASA/GAL differ from the role of an attorney?

An attorney speaks for what the child wants, as his legal representation, while the CASA/GAL advocates for the best interests of the child.

Is there a "typical" CASA/GAL?

CASA/GAL's come from all walks of life, with a variety of professional, educational, and ethnic backgrounds. Our program is composed of both male and female volunteers, many of whom hold a full-time or part-time job. However, volunteers are screened closely for objectivity, competence, and commitment.

What training does a CASA/GAL receive?

The CASA/GAL Program provides 40 hours of pre-service training using the National CASA Association curriculum and an additional 12 hours of educational training is required every year.

How does the CASA/GAL relate to the child?

The CASA/GAL interviews the child if the child is old enough to talk. If not, the CASA/GAL observes the child's interactions with various people involved in his or her life. The CASA/GAL offers the child trust and advocacy and encourages the child to express his or her own opinion and hope.

How many cases does a CASA/GAL carry at a time?

Generally a CASA/GAL volunteer will carry no more than one or two cases at a time.

How much time does it require to be a CASA/GAL?

Generally a CASA/GAL will spend 10-15 hours a month staying involved with each case until it is resolved.

How does the CASA/GAL Program operate?

The Wood County Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Program is staffed by a Director and 2 full-time Volunteer Coordinators. The program receives funding from donations from both public and private sectors in Wood County, special grant funds and some financial support for administrative expenses from the Wood County Juvenile Court budget. Funding is also provided to the program by the nonprofit advisory board "Friends of Wood County CASA." Currently the program receives federal grant funds as well.

Do lawyers, judges and caseworkers support CASA/GAL Program?

Yes. Juvenile and family court judges implement the CASA/GAL Program in their courtrooms and appoint volunteers. CASA/GAL Programs have been endorsed by the American Bar Association, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the Ohio Juvenile and Family Court Judges Association, and the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators.

How does a CASA/GAL differ from a Children’s Services caseworker?

<u>CASA/GAL</u>	<u>Caseworker</u>
CASA/GAL Program	Department of Jobs and Family Services
1-2 Cases	15-25 Cases
Represents Values of Community	Follows state mandates
recommends to court	recommends to court
gathers information	investigates situation

Does Wood County CASA/GAL belong to any associations?

Yes. The Wood County CASA/GAL Program is a member of the Ohio Association of Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardians ad Litem and the National CASA Association. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association certifies the Wood County CASA/GAL program.

I don’t have the time to be a CASA/GAL now, are there other ways I may assist the program? There are many opportunities to assist the program. Consider becoming a member of the Friends of Wood County CASA non-profit advisory board. Individuals or groups may assist by donating funds or needed items to the program. Groups may plan fund raising events to assist with community awareness and program funding. Purchase an Ohio “Celebrate Kids” license plate, available through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, which provides funds to local CASA/GAL programs each year.

How do I get more information about becoming a Wood County CASA/GAL?

Please contact the Wood County Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Program at 1032 South Dunbridge Road, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402. Telephone 419-352-3554; E-mail casa@co.wood.oh.us or visit the website- woodcountycasa.org.



Wood County Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad litem Program website: www.woodcountycasa.org
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