

CASA Case Planning and Investigation

Volunteer Advocate

1. FIRST STEPS:

A. Discuss case with staff, get copy of signed Appointment Letter

B. **Meet the DCS Case Worker.** When setting an appointment to meet with the Case Worker, call DCS and make sure to indicate that you will want to see files while you are there!

Anderson County DCS: (865) 425-4458

Blount County DCS: (865) 981-2336

Scott County DCS: (423) 663-4119, (423) 663-4112

Notes: This may take several calls. Do not be discouraged! If necessary, call the number above and try asking the desk to page the person, in case he/she is away from the phone. You may also skip to step C. while you are awaiting a return call!

When you meet the Case Worker, get him/her to give you background on the case as well as a look at the files. Make sure to find out if there are any other DCS workers or services involved. **Also make sure to get on the list to be called for case meetings or “CFTMs”.**

C. **Meet the Guardian ad Litem (GAL).** He/she should be able to tell you about his/her view of the case and what investigation has been done. Ideally, we should be working in a cooperative relationship with the GAL! Remember, if he/she asks you for input, you may give it, but you may NOT share medical records!

2. JUMP IN!

A. **Meet the KIDS!** Keep in mind that you will be seeing the kids at LEAST once a month, or more if needed. Your first meeting should be a “get to know you” time....do NOT interrogate!

Notes: For young kids you might want to have some crayons or play dough to break the ice, but be careful! If you bring something like that, take it back with you “for next time”....you do not want to set the expectation that you will bring the kids new toys every visit!

*Remember not to put yourself in a position where you are alone with a kid in a closed room! If they want to show you their room, bring the placement or stand in the doorway. For a private talk you can sit at the kitchen or somewhere that you can be alone but be seen by the placement.

B. **Meet the Placement.** This should happen when meeting the kids for the first time. In asking them questions, keep the focus on the current needs of the kids (school, medical, etc.) and how they are adjusting. Also remember to check out the home to make sure it fits the kids’ needs.

C. **Meet the Parents.** Make sure to explain that you are there for the child, and you are not with DCS. Typically they will talk without too much prompting. Do not ask them if they “did it”, etc....

Use open ended questions, such as “tell me what happened the night DCS came” or “how did that make you feel?” Also ask them if there are others you should talk to.



CASA of the Tennessee Heartland

Anderson Co.-100 N. Main St. Rm 115 Clinton, TN 37716 P: 865.463.6850

Blount Co.-391 Court St. Rm. 212 Maryville, TN 37802 P: 865.273.5993

Scott Co.-2845 Baker Highway Huntsville, TN 37756 P: 423.663.8943

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- D. **Further Investigation:** Based on what you hear from everyone above, make contact with other sources as needed, such as schools, doctors, therapists, other family members, pastors, etc....remember not to share what you get from one source with another!
3. **REPORT!** Talk with CASA staff! At this point you can probably start drafting a report!