

# The CASA Role, In Detail

Make no mistake, there's a lot involved in being a Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA. But it's critically important work – after all you'll be advocating for some of the most precious cargo – children. As abused and neglected youth, they are relying on you to help be their voice as court proceedings involving their future play out.



So, let's look at the specific duties of a Kalamazoo CASA. They include, but are not limited to:

1. Become familiar with the facts and circumstances underlying the allegation(s). Information gathering will likely include interviewing the child, the child's siblings, parents, social workers, care providers, and any other people necessary to form a full and proper assessment.
2. Read and become familiar with all pertinent material contained in the Court's legal and social file. Review copies of all reports, case plans, and Court orders filed in the matter.
3. Consult with the child's attorney and other parties related to the case to help determine what is in the child's best interest.
4. Meet regularly with the child (a minimum of 1 face-to-face contact every 7-10 days).
5. Explain your role, duties, and responsibilities to all parties associated with the case.
6. Appear at all scheduled court hearings and participate in pre-trial conferences pertaining to your assigned case.
7. Offer a written report of findings and recommendations regarding the best interests of your assigned child and discuss the reports and recommendations with the program supervisor prior to submitting your reports to the Court.
8. Be able to explain the court proceedings to the child, as necessary.
9. Identify potential resources to facilitate family preservation, early family reunification, or alternative permanency planning.
10. Participate in the formulation of the case service plan by making recommendations with regard to appropriate services, programming, and suggesting alternative solutions.
11. Determine whether services for the family, specified in court approved case plans and court orders, are provided in a timely manner and are accomplishing their intended purpose. The CASA will also inform the Court of any barriers that prevent, or may potentially prevent, the family's ability to take advantage of the services. These services may include: evaluations, assessments, home-based services, and/or treatment for the child and their family.

12. Be familiar with the facts of the case, as well as the interests of the child, in judicial or administrative proceedings outside of the Kalamazoo County Ninth Circuit Court – Family Division (i.e., criminal proceedings in which the child are cited as a victim and/or witness).
13. Always advocate for the child’s best interest in the mental health, educational, welfare, juvenile justice, and other community systems when related to the circumstances bringing the child within the court’s jurisdiction.
14. File written monthly reports with the program director.
15. Be familiar and comply with the State of Michigan’s Child Protection Law and Juvenile Code.
16. Report known or suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect immediately to the program director and to the appropriate authorities.
17. Conduct yourself professionally at all times and do your best to maintain cooperation with all parties involved in the case.
18. Remain actively involved in his/her assigned case until permanency is achieved and/or wardship is terminated.
19. Attend monthly trainings/support groups of the Kalamazoo County CASA Program. (Nine 2-hour sessions scheduled per year.)

**You explicitly may not and will not:**

- Provide services to the child or the family
  - Take a child to the CASA’s home
- Give legal advice or therapeutic counseling
- Make placement arrangements for the child
- Give money or expensive gifts to the child or family
- Be related to anyone involved in the case or be employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest

[Click here](#) to learn more about what a CASA is.  
[Here are some important things to consider](#) before you apply as a CASA.  
 Ready to fill out the application? [Click here](#).

Questions? Contact Kelly Kucinich, Director, Kalamazoo County CASA Program  
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**“Without my CASA’s support, I would not have graduated high school. In fact, I might not even be here today.”**



**Kalamazoo County Court Appointed Special Advocate Program**  
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