CASA Volunteers - Case Record Access

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

Policy: 1100.0010

Effective Date: October 8, 1984 Version: 1

The Office of the Court Appointed Special Advocate is an arm of the Rhode Island Family Court System. The CASA Office is staffed by a group of trained volunteers (VCASA), attorneys, and social workers assigned to represent the best interest of the child who is the subject of a Dependent/Neglected/Abused Petition.

In order to facilitate a close working relationship between the CASA staff and the Department of Children, Youth and Families, which benefits the needs of those children we mutually serve, a procedure has been developed to enhance cooperation and sharing of appropriate records and reports.

Related Procedure…

Case Record Access

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Procedure From Policy 1100.0010: CASA Volunteers - Case Record Access

A. The CASA Office will be responsible for providing the appropriate DCYF worker and legal staff with a timely written notice of the appointment of each CASA volunteer, attorney, and/or social worker.

B. The CASA Office will provide the appropriate DCYF worker and legal staff with a timely written notice whenever the services of a CASA are withdrawn or a different CASA is assigned.

C. If a case is transferred from one DCYF worker to another DCYF worker, it will be the responsibility of the transferring DCYF worker to notify the CASA volunteer of the change in worker status. The transferring DCYF worker shall provide this information to the CASA volunteer within ten (10) working days of the transfer.

D. DCYF will share information with CASA and allow access to DCYF records according to the following guidelines:

1. The appropriate CASA volunteer will provide either verbal or written notice of intent to review a case record. This notification is provided in order to allow the appropriate DCYF staff member to be available, when feasible, to assist the CASA volunteer in interpreting any information provided in the record. It is necessary that a DCYF staff worker be present while the CASA volunteer reviews the record.
2. The CASA volunteer shall have a photo ID from VCASA on his/her person to ensure proper identification.
3. The CASA volunteer will uphold the confidentiality of those involved and will not discuss the material in the records with the client(s) or any other individual or professional not directly involved in the case.

E. Release of case information from the DCYF case record:

1. Release of any and all case information within the DCYF records shall be kept to an absolute minimum.
2. DCYF will release information that is generated by this Department when appropriate and necessary.
3. DCYF will not release information generated by another agency to the CASA volunteer. The Department will permit the CASA volunteer to review such information in the case record.

F. The appropriate social worker shall immediately notify the CASA volunteer of instances of alleged or actual institutional abuse/neglect. The Case Activity Note written following notification shall include:

1. Name(s) of guardian ad litem, CASA volunteer, and/or attorney of record.
2. Date contacted.
3. Name of staff member making notification.
4. Information conveyed. The information shall be limited to facts conveyed to the Department about the incident.

5. ~~If a CASA volunteer requests additional information relative to the allegation, he/she shall be entitled to such information provided it has been~~

~~developed by this Department. DCYF will not release information generated by another agency to the CASA volunteer. The Department will permit the CASA volunteer to review such information in the case record.~~

6. ~~The supervisor shall ensure that it is properly noted in a Case Activity Note when and what additional information has been released.~~