

## WHAT IS CASANYS?

CASA: Advocates for Children of New York State is the association dedicated to assisting local CASA programs throughout the state. Through training and technical assistance, information and funding support, CASANYS helps local programs thrive. CASANYS staff serve as liaisons to the National CASA organization and participate in advocacy task forces dealing with such critical issues as permanency planning, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and health care issues of children in foster care.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

CASA Programs provide numerous opportunities for you to help children at risk:

- ♥ Volunteer – become a CASA volunteer and work directly with your county’s Family Court to speak up for children in need.
- ♥ Make a contribution – your donation will help us maintain critical support for abused and neglected children.
- ♥ In-kind donations of supplies, services, or equipment aid in our efforts.
- ♥ Share your skills – From fundraising to board committee work, use your skills to assist at either the State Association or local CASA program.
- ♥ Spread the word – talk to friends and family about CASANYS. Encourage them to participate in improving the lives of children who need their help.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT CASANYS

Contact us to see how you can help.

**CASA:** ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK STATE

32 Essex Street  
Albany, NY 12206

Phone: 518.426.5354  
Toll-free: 877.80.VOICE  
Fax: 518.426.5348  
E-mail: [mail@casanys.org](mailto:mail@casanys.org)  
Web: [www.casanys.org](http://www.casanys.org)

## FIND A LOCAL CASA PROGRAM

Visit [www.casanys.org](http://www.casanys.org) for a list of programs and contact information on county CASA programs across New York State. If your county is not listed and you are interested in starting a CASA program, please call CASANYS toll-free at 877.80.VOICE.

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*Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.*



# CASA:

## ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK STATE

*Speak up for a Child*



## SUPPORTING SAFE, PERMANENT HOMES FOR CHILDREN AT RISK

Imagine you are a child again. You have been abused and neglected, and soon, a Family Court judge will decide where you will live. You have never felt so alone and you need someone to help make sure you're safe and cared for.



Each year, nearly 30,000 New York State children are in foster care while authorities investigate more than 50,000 new indicated reports of child abuse or neglect.

Every day, these children enter the child protective system which works with families, foster parents, and treatment providers to ensure their safety.

But these children are often scared and reluctant to trust in the system at a time when they are most vulnerable. How their cases are handled can mean the difference between their growing up as contributing adults or as reminders of how we, as a society, have failed them.

## CASA VOLUNTEERS

The court system is intimidating for most adults ... so imagine what it must be like for abused and neglected children. They feel alone and helpless, being forced to face an uncertain future through no fault of their own

*Enter CASA . . .* Court Appointed Special Advocates. These volunteers work with family courts to make sure that each child's voice is heard. CASA volunteers come from all walks of life ... ordinary citizens with an extraordinary commitment to helping children secure a safe and permanent home.

## WHAT DO CASA VOLUNTEERS DO?

After an intensive formal training period, CASA volunteers are sworn in by a judge and given the authority to speak with and collect information relating to specifically assigned Family Court cases.

Since CASA volunteers take on only one or two cases at a time, they are able to focus their time and energy to find out as much as possible about each child's situation.

In addition to meeting the child assigned to them, volunteers talk with lawyers, social workers, parents and relatives of the child, treatment providers, school officials, foster parents, and others who know the child's circumstances.

## HOW DO CASA VOLUNTEERS HELP?

The sheer volume of cases in family courts limits the amount of time that can be spent on each individual case. For this reason, Family Court judges need the most current and complete information possible in order to decide whether children at risk should be returned to their homes, kept in foster care, or be released for adoption.

The advocate's contribution to the process is to provide as complete a picture of each child as possible. After a thorough review of each child's case, the CASA volunteer submits a formal report to the court to assist the judge in making the best decision on safe placement.

And that's not the end. Volunteers stay on their assigned cases until released by the judge so that they can continue to monitor court orders and make sure that the child remains safe.

