

## Become a CASA Volunteer

If you or someone you know would like more information about the

## Suffolk Court Appointed Special Advocate Program

or would like to volunteer, contact:

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EAC Network's Suffolk Court Appointed Special Advocate program is supported through funds from the Unified Court System and private donations. Cost for training sessions are partially offset by I.O.L.A.



EAC Network is a not-for-profit social service agency that empowers, assists, and cares for over 70,000 people in need through 70+ programs across Long Island and New York City. Our mission is to respond to human needs with programs and services that protect children, promote healthy families and communities, help seniors, and empower individuals to take control of their lives.

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Trained volunteers advocating for children in foster care.

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# *Make a difference in a child's life - be a CASA volunteer.*

## **What is the Suffolk Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program?**

Suffolk CASA develops and administers volunteer advocacy on behalf of abused and neglected children who are under Family Court jurisdiction.

### **Who are the volunteers?**

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers are everyday citizens who have undergone screening and training by EAC Network. Volunteers must be at least 21 years of age.

### **How does the program work?**

Family Court judges appoint CASA volunteers to represent the best interests of children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. The CASA volunteers meet with the children and other interested parties at least once a month, advocate on behalf of the children, and submit to Suffolk CASA and the court written reports to assist the court in achieving safe, permanent homes, and opportunities for the children to thrive. The volunteers are supervised by Suffolk CASA.

## **What types of cases does the program handle?**

Suffolk CASA may be involved in a wide range of cases. These include children who have been placed in foster care by their families (either voluntarily or involuntarily), victims of abuse or neglect, or children who are awaiting adoption.

### **What does the volunteer do?**

The CASA volunteer assists to assure a child's health, safety, wellbeing, and home permanency. When a case is assigned, the CASA volunteer will meet with the attorney for the child as well as caseworkers from public or private agencies to begin developing an understanding of the case. The CASA volunteer will visit with the child at least monthly in the placement setting, and meet with individual(s) granted custodianship, and other individuals who interact with the child. This often includes the biological parents. CASA volunteers often meet with school officials, clinical personnel, and family attorneys. The CASA volunteer is usually assigned only 1 or two cases at a time, and remains with a case from assignment to case closure, routinely not less than 12 months. In addition to monthly visitations with the child and the custodian, the CASA volunteer maintains an effective working relationship with the attorney for the child, caseworkers, parties to the case, and other individuals relevant to the case.

## **Why do the courts appoint volunteer advocates?**

Children with CASA volunteers are more likely to find safe, permanent homes, substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care, and less likely to reenter care. Children with CASA volunteers get more help while in the child welfare system, are more likely to have a consistent, responsible adult presence, and do better in school. Judges value the additional "in the best interests of the child" information the trained volunteer brings to the court.

### **What training do volunteers receive?**

CASA volunteers are trained in aspects of statutes, policies, and procedures that Family Court applies for the removal, placement, custodianship, supervision, and adoption of children determined to be abused or neglected; the child welfare system; working with families and interviewing techniques; writing reports for the court; courtroom procedures; and working with attorneys and caseworkers.

### **How do I become a CASA volunteer?**

You must submit an application, schedule an interview, pass a background check, successfully complete a 30-hour pre-service training course, and commit to stay with a case until it is closed.



Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**