



Voices for Children
Montgomery
Montgomery County's
CASA Program
*...the eyes and ears of
the Court*



**VOICES for
CHILDREN**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

What Is CASA?

- CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocates, are trained community volunteers, appointed by a judge, to represent the best interests of children.
- VFCM's mission is permanency for children.
- Once appointed, a CASA volunteer is assigned to work one-on-one with his or her assigned child.
- CASAs review records and interview everyone connected to their assigned children to provide detailed information and recommendations in written reports to Juvenile Court judges.
- CASA Programs recruit, screen, train, and provide ongoing supervision and support to volunteers.
- In Montgomery County, prospective CASA volunteers participate in a thorough screening process including 2 interviews with CASA staff, state and FBI criminal background checks, child abuse registry, reference checks.
- CASA Volunteers are required to participate in 40 hours of pre-service training before being accepted into the Program and assigned to a child.
- Once assigned, volunteers are provided regular ongoing supervision and training by CASA's professional staff.




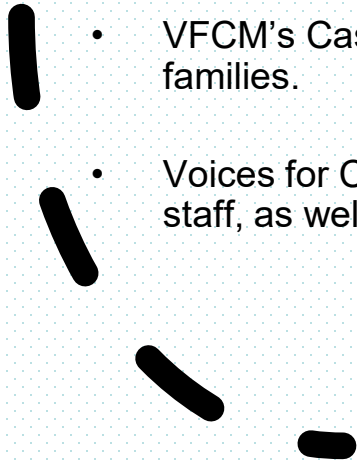
Background

- 1974 – Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) enacted by Congress out of concern about the lack of quality legal representation for children involved in abuse and neglect cases.
- CAPTA requires that “in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem shall be appointed” to represent the child’s best interests.
- First CASA Program started by Superior Court Judge David Soukup in Seattle, Washington, in 1977.
- National CASA Association (NCASAA) was established to create uniform standards for CASA Programs which were, by then developing across the country.
- In 1990, Congress enacted the Victims of Child Abuse Act, endorsing CASA and providing federal funds to develop statewide CASA programs.
- In 2024:
 - Over 900 CASA programs across the country.
 - Over 93,300 volunteers active.
 - Approximately 271,800 children served.

- CASA of Montgomery County was the first CASA Program in Maryland.
- Founded in 1987 through the efforts of the local chapter of the NCJW, local legislators, and Juvenile Court Judges John Tracey and Douglas Moore.
- Since 1987, more than 2,700 volunteer advocates have been trained and nearly 3,200 children have been served in Montgomery County.
- Adopted Doing Business As name of Voices for Children Montgomery in 2017 to avoid confusion with other organizations with the CASA acronym.
- Local CASA programs serving other jurisdictions in Maryland:

Allegany County
 Anne Arundel County
 Baltimore City
 Baltimore County
 Calvert County
 Caroline County
 Carroll County
 Cecil County
 Charles County
 Dorchester County

Frederick County
 Harford County
 Howard County
 Kent County
 Montgomery County
 Prince George's County
 St. Mary's County
 Talbot County
 Washington County
 Wicomico/Worcester Counties

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- Voices for Children Montgomery is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.
 - Currently, approximately 170 volunteers assigned to 174 children with 16 children waiting.
 - Funded in part by County and State grants and the remainder raised through foundation grants, private donations, events. etc.
 - National CASA guidelines suggest that CASA programs maintain a ratio of one case supervisor for every 30 assigned volunteers.
 - Current volunteer supervision staff includes the Program Director, 4 full-time Case Supervisors and 1 part-time Case Supervisor.
 - VFCM's Case Supervisors have all had direct-service experience working with children and families.
 - Voices for Children Montgomery maintains strong working relationships with Child Welfare staff, as well as other professionals involved with the children we serve.
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Appointment of a CASA: The Referral Process

- CASA's are appointed by order of a Juvenile Court judge to the CASA program to appoint a volunteer.
- CASA's role is to be independent and objective.
- In Maryland, CASA operates under the "friend of the Court" model.
- Any party can request a CASA.
- Judges may appoint CASAs to children whether a party to the case requests one.
- Once assigned to the Program, VFCM Program staff reads the Court file and then matches each child with an appropriate volunteer.



CASA Roles and Responsibilities

- Meet with the child regularly.
- Interview all parties to the case, as well as teachers, doctors, therapist, and other service providers.
- Participate in treatment and school meetings, if possible.
- Provide written reports to the Court for review and permanency plan hearings.
- Attend Court hearings.

Actions Outside the CASA Role

- Make placement arrangements for the child.
- Take a child home.
- Involve their own friends or family in their case.
- Give therapeutic or legal counseling or advice.
- Lend or give money or expensive gifts to the child or family.
- Provide a service that encourages the child or family to be dependent on the CASA, or is a conflict with another professional's role. (i.e. transportation, supervision of visits).

Contact Information and Links

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Website:
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National CASA Association's Website:
www.nationalcasa.org

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