

What is CASA?

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES

When a child enters the foster care system because his or her home is no longer safe, the courts may appoint a committed community volunteer to advocate for the child's (or sibling group's) best interests both in and outside of the courtroom. These trained advocates, empowered directly by the courts, offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care. With 72 local CASA programs in the state of Texas, Texas CASA provides some financial support and services to help ensure each local program operates effectively and is able to seek out quality advocates to work diligently to help children find their forever homes.

CASA VOLUNTEERS

CASA volunteers are ordinary citizens doing extraordinary things! These volunteers come from all walks of life with a variety of professional, educational, and cultural backgrounds. All CASAs have one thing in common: they are passionately committed to helping children.

BE BY MY SIDE.



EVERY CHILD HAS A CHANCE—IT'S YOU.

As a Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA volunteer, you can keep abused and neglected children safe while they reach a safe and permanent home.

CASA volunteers speak up for a child in court. You are not a foster parent – you are a voice making a difference at a critical point in a child's life.

Visit casabellcoryell.org to learn more. Start making a difference for a child today!

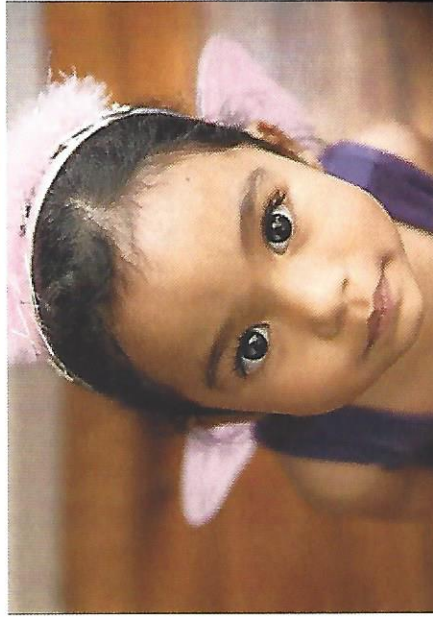
MISSION

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) of Bell and Coryell Counties serve abused and neglected children by providing a trained volunteer to be the voice for the child's right to safety in placement, permanence in family life, and a loving home.

Every child deserves to be protected and cared for. It is our duty as a community to ensure their voices are heard, they receive proper care, and they are kept safe within the child welfare system.



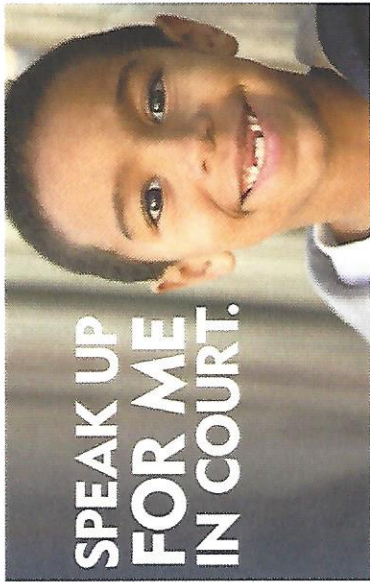
EVERY CHILD HAS A CHANCE – IT'S YOU®



Be by my side.

CASA of Bell & Coryell Counties
112 North Main Street
Belton, Texas 76513
(254) 774-1881
<https://casabellcoryell.org>





**SPEAK UP
FOR ME
IN COURT.**

THE ROLE OF A CASA VOLUNTEER

A CASA volunteer provides a judge with objective information about the child to help the judge make sound decisions about that child's placement and future. The CASA volunteer spends significant time getting to know the child and gaining trust. The volunteer also reviews records and interviews the parents, social workers, foster placement providers, relatives, teachers, therapists, and other individuals in the child's life to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation. CASAs then use this information to make fact-based recommendations to the court regarding the best interest of the child.

CASA VOLUNTEERS:

- Commit to at least one year of child advocacy
- Communicate effectively and objectively, both orally and in writing
- Participate in an in-depth training program
- Pass criminal and CPS background checks
- Are at least 21 years old

KEY OUTCOMES FOR THE CASA MODEL



CASA volunteer-based advocacy works.

- Research shows that having a CASA volunteer in a child's life produces measurably better outcomes now and in adulthood.



A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to find a safe, permanent home.

- More likely to be adopted
- Half as likely to re-enter foster care
- Substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care
- More likely to have a plan for permanency, especially children of color



Children with CASA volunteers get more help while in the system...

- More services are ordered for the children



...and are more likely to have a consistent, responsible adult presence.

- Volunteers spend significantly more time with the child than a paid guardian ad litem.

Become a CASA! - Visit www.casabellcoryell.org



Children with CASA volunteers spend less time in foster care...

- "It is quite remarkable that children without CASA involvement are spending an average of over eight months longer in care, compared to children having CASA involvement."



...and are less likely to be bounced from home to home.

CASA volunteers:

- Improve representation of children
- Reduce the time needed by lawyers
- Are more likely than paid lawyers to file written reports
- Are rated more highly by judges than attorneys for each of 9 duties
- Are highly effective in having their recommendations adopted by the court



Children with CASA volunteers do better in school...

- More likely to pass all courses
- Less likely to have poor conduct in school
- Less likely to be expelled



...and score better on nine protective factors.

- Neighborhood resources
- Interested adults
- Sense of acceptance
- Controls against deviant behavior
- Models of conventional behavior
- Positive attitude towards the future
- Valuing achievement
- Ability to work with others
- Ability to work out conflicts