

**The National CASA Association
Volunteer Training Curriculum**

Independent Study Manual

2007 REVISION





National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association © 2007

National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association
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The National CASA Association, together with its state and local members, supports and promotes court appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.



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How to Use the Independent Study Manual

The National CASA Association Volunteer Training Curriculum is designed to give you a solid base of knowledge and skills to begin your volunteer work. The Independent Study Manual will serve as your guide during training and will continue to be an important resource to which you refer throughout your service as a CASA/GAL volunteer.

The manual begins with an overview of the CASA/GAL volunteer role, the need for volunteer advocates, and the history of child advocacy in the United States. It then moves into specific skills and knowledge you need in order to work effectively with children and families. Next, you learn about the specific steps you will follow once you are assigned to a case, from gathering information and taking notes to writing court reports and monitoring a case. The final chapter covers procedural information and gives you a chance to review the information and skills you have learned. The material in each chapter builds on knowledge gained in previous chapters, and information and tasks progress from simple to complex.

The facilitator will provide a schedule of **training** and **debriefing sessions**. You will participate in group training sessions for Chapters 1, 3, and 10. For the rest of the chapters, you will complete the activities in the Independent Study Manual and then meet with the facilitator at a debriefing session to review the material.

Each chapter centers on a series of **activities**. The activities are designed to help you learn new material, relate it to what you already know, apply what you've learned, and consider how you will use it in the future. Activity instructions appear in boxes and are frequently followed by text or worksheets. It is not necessary to write in complete sentences when you complete the activities.



The curriculum's **case studies** allow you to apply what you are learning to a case. You will use the Harris-Price case, which appears at the end of Chapter 1, to apply material in Chapters 1–7. You will use the Kaylee Moore case, which unfolds throughout Chapters 8 and 9, as you practice various aspects of the CASA/GAL volunteer role. An optional activity in Chapter 10 uses a third case as a wrap-up for the entire curriculum.

At the end of each chapter, the **Looking Ahead** section assigns material to be completed before you begin working on the next chapter. These assignments allow you to apply what you've learned, explore topics in more depth, or prepare for a later session or chapter.

Throughout the Independent Study Manual you will find **Learn More!** references in the margins. These point you to websites or to the curriculum's Resource Materials for more in-depth exploration of a particular topic.

The **Parking Lot**, found at the end of each independent study chapter, provides a place for you to note questions, issues, and concerns about topics or activities covered in that chapter.

The **Glossary** at the back of the Independent Study Manual defines terms that appear in the curriculum as well as those that you will encounter during your work as a volunteer.

A list of **Web Resources** appears at the back of the Independent Study Manual. Organized by topics covered in Chapters 1–7, this list points to a wealth of websites where you can find additional information about topics related to CASA/GAL volunteer work.

Also organized by chapter, the **Resource Materials** contain articles that provide in-depth exploration of topics touched on in the Independent Study Manual. The facilitator will provide you with a copy of the Resource Materials on CD. If you do not have access to a computer with a CD drive, please tell the facilitator and make arrangements to access the Resource Materials in another form.

Throughout the curriculum the facilitator will provide additional **handouts**, some of which offer information specific to your local area or tribal program. Insert the handouts in the appropriate chapter in the Independent Study Manual, so you can refer back to them in the future.

Certain activities require you to listen to or watch **online presentations**. To access these presentations, go to www.casanet.org/_apps/ise-login.asp. The user number is 11227, and the password is ise@#9. If you do not have access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection, you will read material in your manual instead of listening to audio presentations and you will watch the videos at debriefing sessions.

The facilitator will hand out **time sheets** during the first training session. Use this time sheet to keep track of the time you spend completing chapters, traveling to and from training and debriefing sessions, and so on, for the length of the training. This will help you become accustomed to tracking your volunteer hours. The facilitator will collect these time sheets at the end of the training course.

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