



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates

FOR CHILDREN

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

CASA/GAL Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

Pre-Work Handouts

CHAPTER ONE

HEARST *foundations*



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CHAPTER 1:

Pre-Work Handouts

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Pre-Work Instructions

This section details the pre-work that you need to complete before the classroom session. Completing this work prior to the session will allow you to fully participate during the training session and build the knowledge and skills you need to be an effective and successful CASA/GAL volunteer.

Prior to attending the first session of the volunteer training, please complete the following assignments:

- Read the CASA/GAL volunteer job description provided by the facilitator.
- Read the Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteer Work below. Mark the areas on the checklist that are your current strengths, as well as the areas you want to work on during the training.
- Read the Child Welfare History below, and write down any questions you have about the material.
- Read the Common Acronyms handout, which provides a list of acronyms used by your local CASA/GAL program and the local court system.
- Read the Bleux Case File. In your own words, write a case history in one or two paragraphs. What additional information would you like to know about the family in the case? Write down a few questions that you have.

Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteers

Volunteer Work Handout

Please review the following competency checklist. As you review each area, note whether it is a current strength or if it is an area that needs further development.

Volunteer Name:

Date:

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
CASA/GAL Role	Knows how to define the CASA/GAL role		
	Understands the function of a CASA/GAL report to the court		
	Understands the competencies necessary to succeed as a CASA/GAL volunteer		
	Knows how to act within the CASA/GAL volunteer role and can differentiate his/her role from that of others involved in the case		
	Knows how to find support and resources to assist his/her advocacy		
	Understands how to obtain relevant confidential information		
	Understands the importance of partnering with his/her supervisor to develop goals and to discuss issues and assess progress		
	Understands the importance of participating in ongoing professional development to strengthen advocacy skills		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Communication	Knows how to effectively articulate a point of view while advocating for the needs of the child		
	Understands the importance of establishing trust and rapport with all parties		
	Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely		
	Knows how to work collaboratively and manage conflict effectively		
	Recognizes the importance of treating others with dignity and respect		
	Knows how to be an active listener		
	Understands and respects the perspectives, values and input from others		
	Knows the importance of being forthright, thorough and detail oriented		
	Knows how to utilize basic communication and interviewing skills		
	Knows strategies for interviewing children		
	Understands the elements of a court report		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Cultural Competence	Understands the extent to which cultural institutions and values may oppress, marginalize or alienate some individuals or groups and create or enhance privilege and power of others		
	Understands and demonstrates self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values when working with diverse groups		
	Knows strategies and steps to take to increase cultural competency skills and demonstrate culturally competent child advocacy		
	Understands how to recognize and challenge own biases		
	Understands the root causes of disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system and the disparate outcomes children of color experience		
	Knows how to be sensitive and responsive to different cultural differences		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Sound Judgment	Knows how to set healthy boundaries and respects the boundaries of others		
	Knows how to adhere to all policies, ethical guidelines and procedures		
	Recognizes the importance of flexibility in handling case-related changes		
	Understands managing challenges by collaborating based on the best interest of the child		
	Knows how to maintain objectivity and avoid making assumptions		
	Understands the importance of anticipating and recognizing potential problems		
	Understands making appropriate fact based recommendations to the court		
	Understands basing decisions on thorough review of the information		
	Understands evaluating alternative decisions		
	Understands the confidentiality requirements of being a CASA/ GAL volunteer		
	Understands that your personal values and biases about mental illness, domestic violence and substance abuse can affect your objectivity		
	Knows how to evaluate what is in a child's best interest		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Initiative	Knows how to be self-motivated and work independently		
	Understands the importance of being resourceful and identifying needs as well as services to meet the needs		
	Recognizes the importance of ensuring all parties are moving expeditiously toward permanency		
	Knows the importance of persistence in pursuit of information		
	Understands the need to advocate for access to quality, individualized services		
	Understands the need to respectfully challenge the status quo		
	Recognizes the importance of creating innovative strategies to resolve issues		
Foundations of Knowledge			
	Understands the importance of using a strength-based approach		
	Understands concurrent planning		
	Understands advocacy differs dependent on the age of the child		
	Understands the options for permanence for a child		
	Understands how to identify a child's basic needs		
	Understands the cycle of attachment		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Foundations of Knowledge (cont'd)	Understands possible reactions to separation & loss		
	Understands age appropriate behavior and development for children of all ages		
	Understands how mental illness impacts families		
	Understands the factors that contribute to a child's resilience		
	Understands how poverty can impact families and children		
	Understands strategies to advocate for children and adolescents with mental health disorders		
	Understands the ways that substance abuse can affect children & families		
	Knows the importance of being aware of resources in the community that assist with substance abuse		
	Understands how domestic violence affects children & families		
	Understands the nature and scope of trauma and how it affects children		
	Understands the importance of resilience in overcoming trauma in children		
	Knows strategies to address educational challenges		
	Understands the issues faced by LGBTQ youth in the child welfare system		
	Understands the risk factors for child abuse and neglect		

Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Current Strength	Competency to Develop
Foundations of Knowledge (cont'd)	Understands the factors that contribute to child resilience		
	Recognizes the importance of understanding a child's journey through the child welfare system		
	Understands MSL and its importance when advocating for a child's best interest		
	Understands the nature and scope of the roles of others (e.g., caseworkers, attorneys, therapists, etc.)		
	Knows the importance of the federal laws that impact his/her advocacy		
	Understands what constitutes abuse and neglect		
Self Care			
	Understands the importance of healthy coping strategies to prevent burn out		
	Understands the importance of being aware of personal limitations		
	Understands the importance of setting clear, healthy boundaries and can identify indicators of stress		
	Understands the importance of maintaining a healthy life style		
	Understands the importance of knowing when to ask for and accept help		
	Understands the importance of maintaining a sense of hope and optimism		

Child Welfare History

Mary Ellens' Story

Mary Ellen's case took place in 1874. Her spirit remains with us because her case is generally regarded as the beginning of public concern for the plight of abused and neglected children.

Mary Ellen was a child whose father was dead and whose mother could not care for her because she was destitute and had to work full time. The New York Commission of Charities and Correction placed Mary Ellen with Mary McCormack Connolly and her husband, who were to care for her and report each year on her progress.

Instead, Mrs. Connolly abused her. She beat Mary Ellen, locked her in a room, rarely allowed her outside and did not provide adequate food or clothing.

Upset by the child's screaming, a neighbor told a mission worker about Mary Ellen. The mission worker could find no one to intervene; the police had no grounds because no crime was being committed, and the agencies wouldn't get involved because they did not have legal custody.

The mission worker finally appealed to Henry Bergh, the founder and president of the ASPCA, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He took up her cause and was able to persuade a judge to hear her case.

Mary Ellen was carried into the courtroom wrapped in a horse blanket. This is what the newspaper reported that she told the judge:

My father and mother are dead. I don't know how old I am. I call Mrs. Connolly mama. I have never had but one pair of shoes, but I cannot recollect when that was . . . My bed at night has been only a piece of carpet stretched on the floor underneath a window. Mama has been in the habit of whipping and beating me almost every day. She used to whip me with a twisted whip—a raw hide. [Mama] struck me with the scissors and cut me . . . I have no recollection of ever having been kissed by anyone—have never been kissed by Mama. Whenever Mama went out I was locked up in the bedroom. I do not want to go back to live with Mama because she beats me so.

Child Welfare History, Cont'd.

Mary Ellen was removed from the people who had mistreated her. Her case stirred public attention, and complaints began to pour in to Henry Bergh. So many cases of child beating and cruelty to children came to light that citizens called a community meeting and formed an association “for the defense of outraged childhood.” That association gave rise to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which was formally incorporated the year after Mary Ellen’s situation came to light.

Child-focused policies are relatively new:

- 1899: First juvenile court (Chicago) placed dependent and delinquent children in homes for wayward youth or reform schools.
- 1910: X-ray technology was developed, eventually allowing doctors to detect subdural (under the skin) injuries and untreated fractures.
- 1938: First legal rights of children: Fair Labor Standards Act imposed restrictions on working hours and conditions.
- 1962: Dr. C. Henry Kempe created the diagnosis for battered child syndrome.
- 1965: Mandatory reporting laws were in place in all states.

Beginning in the 1970s, the United States Congress became aware (along with the rest of the nation) that the child welfare system was not adequately protecting children. From a historical perspective, it can be said that we are still relatively new to the concepts of protecting abused and neglected children and developing appropriate systems, methods and programs to cope with the problems these children face.

The chart on the following pages outlines information about federal child abuse and neglect laws. You do not need to memorize these laws; just become familiar with them.

Federal Child Abuse & Neglect Laws

1974: Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA), P.L. 93-247, amended 1996

Created the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect and earmarked federal funds for states to establish special programs for child victims of abuse or neglect.

This law requires that states:

- Have child abuse and neglect reporting laws
- Investigate reports of abuse and neglect
- Educate the public about abuse and neglect
- Provide a guardian ad litem to every abused or neglected child whose case results in a judicial proceeding
- Maintain the confidentiality of child protective services records

This law requires that states:

- Learn whether you, as a CASA/ GAL volunteer, are a mandated reporter
- Learn whether the guardian ad litem has to be an attorney in your state

1978: Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Public Law 95-608

This law requires that states:

- Recognize that Indian children have special rights as members of sovereign nations within the United States
- Responded to congressional hearings in the 1970s that revealed a pattern of public and private removal of Indian children from their homes, undermining their families and threatening tribal survival and Native American cultures

For CASA/GAL volunteers:

- Ask whether every child has Native heritage
- Investigate tribal resources and services that can benefit the child
- Be aware that jurisdiction can be transferred to the tribal court
- Pay attention to the heritage and identity needs of the child
- Remember that ASFA timelines do not apply to Indian children

Federal Child Abuse & Neglect Laws, Cont'd.

- Was designed to implement the federal government's trust responsibility to the nations by protecting and preserving the bond between Indian children and their tribe and culture
- Sets up placement preference schemes for foster care placements and adoptions of children who have been determined to be Indian children
- Establishes the right of certain entities, including the tribe and the Indian custodian, if one exists, to appear as parties to child welfare cases
- Determines when and if a case should be transferred to tribal court
- Describes rights of the Indian child and the child's tribe
- Keep in mind that ICWA takes precedence over other federal and state laws
- The National Indian Child Welfare Association has several excellent packets of ICWA information available for a small charge

1978: Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Public Law 95-608

This law requires that states:

- Recruit culturally diverse foster and adoptive families
- Comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act
- Establish standards for foster family homes and review the standards periodically
- Set goals and plan for the number of children who will be in foster care for more than 24 months

For CASA/GAL volunteers:

- Consider possible placements that respect child's cultural heritage but do not limit his/her options
- Learn the name of the data collection system used in your state

Federal Child Abuse & Neglect Laws, Cont'd.

- Provide “reasonable efforts” to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from his/her home or to make it possible for the child to return to his/her home
- Have a data collection and reporting system about the children in care

1990: Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act

- Establishes federal requirements for the reporting and investigation of child abuse and neglect on tribal lands
- Requires background checks on individuals who have contact with Indian children (including foster and adoptive families)
- Authorizes funding for tribal child abuse prevention and treatment programs

1993: Court Improvement Legislation

Encourages reform in the court system

1994: Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA)

The goals of this law are to:

- Decrease the time children wait to be adopted
- Prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in the placement of children and in the selection of foster and adoptive placements
- Facilitate the development of a diverse pool of foster and adoptive families

1996: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Amended

Amended to include Court Appointed Special Advocates as guardian ad litem

Federal Child Abuse & Neglect Laws, Cont'd.

1997: Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Public Law 105-89

This act embodies three key principles:

- The safety of children is the paramount concern
- Foster care is a temporary setting and not a place for children to grow up
- Permanency planning should begin as soon as the child enters foster care

This act directs timelines within which the child welfare system operates:

- Requires permanency plan within 12 months
- Requires dispositional hearing within 12 months of placement
- Requires court reviews every six months

1997: Volunteer Protection Act

Limits liability of volunteers

1999: Foster Care Independence Act

Addresses needs of older youth in foster care, particularly those aging out of the system

This act does the following:

- Allows states to serve youth up to age 21 regardless of whether or not they are eligible for the Title IV-E Foster Care Program
- Increases federal funding to assist and serve young people transitioning from foster care

Independence Program does the following:

- States explicitly that “enrollment in Independent Living Programs can occur concurrently with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in adoptive families for older children in foster care,” thereby clarifying that independent-living services should not be seen as an alternative to adoption for teens

Federal Child Abuse & Neglect Laws, Cont'd.

- Establishes the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, which strongly supports the dependency system's capacity to help youth make a healthy transition into adulthood (see information at right)
- Allows states to provide Medicaid to young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in foster care on their 18th birthday
- Increases the youth-assets limit from \$1,000 to \$10,000 without jeopardizing the youth's eligibility for Title IV-E-funded foster care
- Ensures that foster parents have adequate preparation to care for the children placed in their home. This provision can be used to strengthen the preparation of foster parents to care for adolescents.
- Provides additional funding for adoption incentive payments
- Mandates that states use a portion (up to 30%) of their independent-living program funds to provide room and board for youth 18 to 21 who have left foster care
- Requires states to train both foster and adoptive parents (as well as group-care workers and case managers) about the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living
- Reinforces the importance of providing personal and emotional support for children aging out of foster care, through the promotion of interactions with mentors and other dedicated adults
- Specifies that independent-living services may be provided to young people at "various ages" and various stages of achieving independence, "including children waiting for adoption or other permanent options"

Other Laws That Affect CASA/GAL Volunteer Work

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires, among other things, permission or a court order to access “protected health information” for any individual. Your program will have information on how to access health records.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) assists some children, including those in foster care, in obtaining legal permanent residency.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act says that any entity that receives federal funds must provide a professional interpreter in court.

Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act: IV-E is the primary federal funding stream that partially reimburses states for foster care for qualified children. IV-B allots funding for targeted case management services. The state must pay all expenses for a child, who is not IV-E eligible, out of state general revenues. These expenses include foster care, therapy, etc.

The Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (VOCAA) protects the privacy rights of child victims or witnesses during the investigation or prosecution of a federal crime.

Bleux Case File

CPS Case File					
Last Name of Case:			Bleux		
Legal Number(s):			CINA 17-0190		
Child(ren)'s Name	DOB	Age	Ethnicity	Sex	Current Location
Deshawn Bleux	March 12	11 years	AA	Male	Foster Care

Current Caretaker(s)	Address	Phone
Emily Padron and Lawrence Cary	8904 Cleveland Ave NW	555-2272

Attorneys for:		
Mother	Samuel Bluestein	555-7622
Father	Jacob Bell	555-6704
DSS	Meghan Fowler	555-9300 ext. 38

Case History

On November 1, 2017 Deshawn allegedly walked into the Clinton police station and said he was going to hurt himself. The police transported him to Prince George's Hospital where he was evaluated and found not in need of psychiatric hospitalization. Deshawn's mother, Toni Bleux, said she was unwilling to have him returned to her care because he is disrespectful, refuses to follow rules and is aggressive to her. Ms. Bleux said there were no relatives willing to care for Deshawn.

A Facilitation meeting was held at the Department with Toni Bleux, mother and Miles Bleux, father. No resolution could be reached so Deshawn was placed into foster care.

Deshawn was placed in the Foundations therapeutic foster home of Emily Padron and Lawrence Cary in Clinton, Maryland. Adjudication and Disposition occurred on January 22nd. The current permanency plan is reunification with Mother.

CASA/GAL			
History: Case Initially Assigned to:	You and your team	Date assigned: Date terminated:	Today N/A
Current CASA/ GAL Volunteer	You	Date assigned:	Today
Current Social Worker	Jane Morgan		

Court Ordered Services

For the Child:

- Individual therapy, family therapy
- Follow up on routine medical, vision and dental services
- Monitor Deshawn's educational status
- Explore and identify relatives for placement resources

For the Father:

- Family therapy

For the Mother:

- Family therapy

Family Facilitation Meeting

In the matter of:

Deshawn Lee Bleux

Age: 11 years

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The PURPOSE of the Family Team Planning Conference and the Memorandum of Understanding is to expedite the court process for children by sharing information and making recommendations regarding the following issues: placement, visitation, services, paternity and child support.

- I. **ATTENDANCE:** Present at this conference were the following parties: Jane Morgan, County Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigator; Kim Rytter, CPS Supervisor; Antoinette Bleux, mother of the child; Miles Bleux, father of the child; Sabine Lee, Maternal Aunt; Adrienne Nikos, CPS Intern
- II. **RIGHTS:** For purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding, all defenses that could be made by all parties are preserved. In order to protect the rights of all parties, this Memorandum of Understanding does NOT serve to waive any standard objection by law.
- III. **PARENTS:** Inquiries have been made as to the identity and location of any missing parent.
 - The mother did attend the child planning conference.
 - The mother has been served the juvenile petition at the child planning conference. The mother stated that the address on the petition is the correct address.
 - The mother can be reached at 555-1790, cell number.
 - The father did attend the child planning conference
 - The father was served the juvenile petition at his home.
 - The father stated that the address on the petition is the correct address. The father can be reached at 555-3865, cell number
 - According to the father, his name is on the child's birth certificate

Memorandum of Understanding, Cont'd.

- IV. HISTORY:** CPS said that the agency received a report. The report alleged that the parent was refusing to pick up the child after discharge from hospital. The child was admitted to Prince George's Hospital after suicidal ideations. Child is diagnosed with Disruptive behavior disorder, NOS, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Foster Care, Siblings incarcerated. Upon discharge Deshawn denied suicidal or homicidal thoughts or plans and was discharged without medication. A referral for individual therapy was made.
- V. PLACEMENT:** Inquiries have been made as to whether a relative of the child is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision of the child in a safe home and whether placement with such a relative could be in the child's best interest:
- The child is currently placed in foster care.
 - CPS stated that the child is doing well.
 - The agency is considering other family members for placement of the child

VI. SERVICES FOR THE PARENTS

Services for the mother of the child:

- CPS recommends that the mother attend individual therapy and family therapy with the child, and that she have a mental health assessment and follow all recommendations.
- The mother stated that she does not see herself as being in need of these services.

Services for the father of the child:

- CPS recommends that the father attend individual and family therapy with the child.
- The father stated that he is willing to comply with services.

Memorandum of Understanding, Cont'd.

VII. SERVICES FOR THE CHILD

Recommendations

- CPS recommends that the child participate in individual therapy and family therapy.

VIII. VISITATION

- All visits are to be supervised at this time.
- Visitation would be weekly, at the agency at a minimum of 45 minutes. The parents may visit together if they choose. The aunt may also visit with the child.

FAMILY TEAM PLANNING CONFERENCE SIGN-IN & CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that juveniles will be discussed in the Family Team Planning Conference. Through their signatures, the undersigned acknowledge and agree that the privacy of children and their families should be strictly maintained.

	Name	Agency	Address	Phone #
3.	Sabine Lee		330 Hawkins	555-9752
4.	Antoinette Bleux		330 Hawkins	555-1790
6.	Jane Morgan	CPS	200 Brookdale	555-7262
7.	Miles Bleux		740 Center, apt. 204	555-3865
9.	Adrienne Nikos	CPS	200 Brookdale	555-7579
10.	Kim Rytter	CPS	200 Brookdale	555-7260