



ADVOCACY FROM A DISTANCE:

INFORMATION FOR CASA VOLUNTEERS ON REMAINING ENGAGED AND EFFECTIVE IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the midst of this unprecedented pandemic, many Lane County families involved with the child welfare system prior to COVID-19 will encounter unprecedented obstacles to meeting the needs of children and youth in their care. Please take a moment to review this information and be sure to connect with your CASA Supervisor and Peer Coordinator with any questions you may have. If you are seeking a specific resource we did not include, reach out! *Remember we are still here to support you!*

CASA volunteers can still be strong supporters and advocates for the children and youth they are appointed to while observing social distancing and self-quarantining protocols.

As of March 16, 2020 CASA of Lane County has suspended all in-person contacts. This includes visiting children and youth, going to DHS, going to court and more. We are still asking CASA Volunteers to have regular contact with children, youth and caretakers. During this time, families may be struggling with new obstacles they have never faced before, and connection now is more important than ever.

- Virtual/video visits are the first preference for CASAs to engage with the children and youth they serve. Here are some ideas:
 - CASAs can Face Time if both the Volunteer and caregiver have Apple devices
 - CASAs all have Gmail at CASA of Lane County, and can download the Hangouts and Hangouts Meet App to have virtual visits with caregivers who also have Gmail accounts
 - Other options include Skype, Google Duo, WhatsApp, Zoom and MarcoPolo
 - This is a good time to remember not to connect with anyone on your CASA case over social media. Please reach out if you feel this is your only option, and we can support you to find an alternative.
- We realize both families and Volunteers may have barriers that prevent virtual/video visits from happening. The next best option at this time are regular phone calls.
 - Try to see if you can check in more regularly than once a month, if possible.
 - Try to make phone contact with anyone else involved with the child's case during this time to determine what their status is currently in relation to the child in question (if services are suspended, being offered remotely, etc.)
 - This includes contact with biological parents, if the child is not currently in their custody.
 - Be sure to talk to your Peer Coordinator and CASA supervisor if you learn a parent is struggling to find resources or engage in services.

When you are able to make contact, here are some things you can ask about and check on to support children, youth and families:

- Health of all household members -- physical and mental
- How are school/distance learning assignments being completed? What was sent by the district/teacher? Is the teacher available via email to help, if needed? Could the CASA assist virtually?
- What is the family doing to keep busy daily?
- Is anyone in the household still working outside the home?
- Has the child/children had any issues behaviorally since being home?
- If the child's visitation has been suspended due to COVID-19, have they been able to stay in touch with their parent/sibling(s) by phone?
- Is the household having any other challenges? (Financial, shortage of food, childcare for healthcare workers/first responders, etc.)
- Are there upcoming non-urgent medical/dental appointments for the child/children, and if so, has DHS been consulted to determine whether these appointments can be postponed?
- Does the caretaker have supportive individuals they are relying on right now to stay sane and healthy?
 - *If a caregiver, child or youth expresses a concern, contact your Peer Coordinator and CASA Supervisor.*

GUIDELINES FOR CASA VOLUNTEERS

IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

click the [blue links](#) for more information



DO check your CASA
Gmail often

DO continue
reading Discovery

DO work with your
Peer Coordinator and
CASA Supervisor to
make a plan to keep
contact with:

- children and youth
- caregivers
- parents and family members
- service providers
- DHS caseworker

DO continue making
contact logs in
[Optima](#)

DO work on reports
for cancelled and
postposed hearings

DO [Continue Learning](#)

DO [connect](#) with
others and ask for
[support](#)

DO talk with friends
and family about
[CASA](#) as a way to get
involved and help
others

DO [take care of
yourself](#)

DO NOT go to court

DO NOT go to DHS

DO NOT attempt to
see your CASA child
or youth in person

DO NOT go to the
CASA office

DO NOT connect with
anyone on your case
through social media

DO NOT forget to ask
for support when you
need it!