

Court Appointed Special Advocate Powers and Duties

§6342. Court-appointed special advocates

(a) General rule.--The court may appoint or discharge a CASA at any time during a proceeding or investigation regarding dependency under this chapter.

(b) Immunity.--A court-appointed special advocate shall be immune from civil liability for actions taken in good faith to carry out the duties of the CASA under this chapter except for gross negligence, intentional misconduct or reckless, willful or wanton misconduct.

(c) Qualifications.--Prior to appointment, a CASA shall:

(1) be 21 years of age or older.

(2) successfully pass screening requirements, including criminal history and child abuse background checks.

(3) successfully complete the training requirements established under subsection (f) and by the court of common pleas of the county where the CASA will serve.

(d) Powers and duties.--Following appointment by the court, the CASA shall:

(1) have full access to and review all records, including records under 23 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to child protective services) relating to the child and other information, unless otherwise restricted by the court;

(2) interview the child and other appropriate persons as necessary to develop its recommendations;

(3) receive reasonable prior notice of all hearings, staff meetings, investigations or other proceedings relating to the child;

(4) receive reasonable prior notice of the movement of the child from one placement to another placement, the return of a child to the home, the removal of a child from the home or any action that materially affects the treatment of the child;

(5) submit written reports to the court to assist the court in determining the disposition best suited to the health, safety and welfare of the child; and

(6) submit copies of all written reports and recommendations to all parties and any attorney of a party.

(e) Confidentiality.--All records and information received under this section shall be confidential and only used by the CASA in the performance of his duties.

(f) Standards.--The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, established under Act of December 21, 1959 (P.L.1962, No.717), entitled "An Act providing for the creation and operation of the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission in the Department of Justice; prescribing its powers and duties; and making an appropriation," shall develop standards governing the qualifications and training of court-appointed special advocates.