

The Forsyth Voice

The official newsletter of Forsyth County's Court Appointed Special Advocates

July 2025

★ Training SUPERSTAR



Let's give a big round of applause to **Sandy Hughes**, our Training Superstar for last quarter! She logged the most training hours in Optima and is now the proud winner of a **\$20 Starbucks gift card!**

Wouldn't you want a gift card too? Make sure you're logging your training hours in Optima!



Check out some disability-related trainings on page 7!

June Month in Review



286

advocacy
hours



32

hearings
attended



3,954

miles
driven

Upcoming Events

- **Friday, July 18th**
Back to School Bash
Beaver Toyota | 11:30AM-1:30PM
- **Wednesday, July 23rd**
ILP Training
United Way | 6PM-7PM
- **Tuesday, July 29th**
June/July Book Club Meeting
SliceAbility | 5:30PM

REGISTER NOW

Highlights

More Hellos and Goodbyes!

This month brings a bittersweet change to our CASA team—we're excited to welcome a new Advocacy Specialist and equally sad to say goodbye to a cherished colleague.



**Welcome,
Ellie!**

Ellie brings a fresh perspective, genuine curiosity, and a strong desire to support volunteers in their advocacy for children. Her approach is rooted in compassion and a readiness to learn and grow alongside the families and advocates she'll be working with.

She shared that she's most excited to “**build relationships with volunteers and help them feel supported every step of the way.**”

We're so excited to have Ellie on board and can't wait to see the energy and new ideas she brings to the team!

Alison has been a steady, compassionate presence on our team, and her contributions have left a lasting impression.

When asked what she'll miss most, Alison shared:

“The heart. The volunteers show up because they genuinely care about children who need someone in their corner, not because they want recognition or rewards. I'll miss their unwavering commitment—the way they follow through, even when the case is hard, or when the outcomes are uncertain, or when the system feels overwhelming. I'll also miss the collaboration. Each volunteer brings their own life experience, perspective, and strength to the table. I'll miss our check-ins, problem-solving brainstorming, and having a shared sense of purpose.”

**Thank you,
Alison!**



Alison, thank you for everything you've given to CASA. Your care, wisdom, and dedication will be deeply missed—and always appreciated.

Features

You Asked, We Answered! - Ask an Advocacy Specialist

Last month, we kicked off a brand-new section in our monthly newsletter where you can ask questions about anything related to court, DFCS, CASA, and more. And you didn't disappoint—your questions are thoughtful, important, and show just how committed you are to advocating for your kids.

This month's featured question comes from one of your fellow CASAs:

“Who am I allowed to share information about my case with, and who should I avoid disclosing details to?”


Great question—and one that comes up often! As a CASA, protecting the confidentiality of your case is one of the most important parts of your role. ***You are a receiver, not a giver, of information.*** That means you'll often be in situations where people genuinely want updates, but it's not appropriate—or allowed—for you to share.

Here's a quick guide on who you can and cannot share information with.

Who can I share information with about my case?



- CASA Staff
- DFCS
- GAL



- Therapists
- Foster Parents/Placements
- Parent Attorney
- Child Advocate Attorney
- Teachers/Social Workers
- Probation Officers
- Biological Parents
- Relatives/Fictive Kin
- Doctors

When in doubt, ask your Advocacy Specialist!
Remember, we are **RECEIVERS** not **GIVERS** of information.

TIP: Memorize a phrase you can comfortably repeat to teachers, foster parents and others who genuinely want to know how a child is doing: ***“I’m so sorry that I can’t give you that information, but you can speak to the DFCS case manager about this! Would you like their contact information?”***

We also added a quick confidentiality reference guide on Page 3 of the newsletter so that you are confident in your role!

Have a question for next month's feature? Send it to us HERE!



CASA CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

YOU ARE A RECEIVER, NOT A GIVER, OF INFORMATION

Your role is to gather and report facts- not to share them with others outside of the professional team, which includes DFCS, CASA, the Juvenile Court, and the GAL.

REFER ANY QUESTIONS TO DFCS

Other parties, including foster parents, often feel out of the loop- but it's not your role to change that. Offer to pass along their concerns to the DFCS case manager.

ONLY SPEAK WITH AUTHORIZED PARTIES

For example, CASA volunteers are not authorized to share case information with the parent's criminal or dependency attorney. Refer them to your Advocacy Specialist.

WHEN YOU MUST DISCLOSE

Share confidential info if your Advocacy Specialist requests it, the court orders it, or you suspect abuse.

SITUATIONS ALLOWING DISCLOSURE

With supervisor approval, you can share info with professionals providing services or when both parties or the court agree.

DISCUSSING CASES HYPOTHETICALLY

You may use hypothetical examples in trainings—but never share names or details that could identify the child or family.

WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK

If something doesn't feel right, check with your Advocacy Specialist before sharing.

Features

What Would You Do? – Real-Life Advocacy Scenarios

Last month, we asked you how you would respond in the following situation:

Your CASA child has been in a stable placement for six months. They're doing well in school and getting along with their foster family. But during a visit, they quietly say, "I just want to go back to my mom's. Can you make that happen?"

Here's how we recommend responding:

- Actively listen to the child.
- Acknowledge their feelings.
 - "It's okay to miss your mom, and it makes a lot of sense to want to be with her."
- Don't make promises.
- Clarify your role and reassure them that their voice matters.
 - "I don't get to make those decisions, but I'll be sure to let the judge know how you're feeling."
- Include the child's wishes in your next court report and talk with your Advocacy Specialist.



Next month's scenario:

"Reunification Hesitation"

The child's parents are meeting their case plan goals and reunification is on the horizon, but the child expresses fear about returning home. What would you do? How do you both validate the child's feelings and support the legal process? What would you write in your court report?

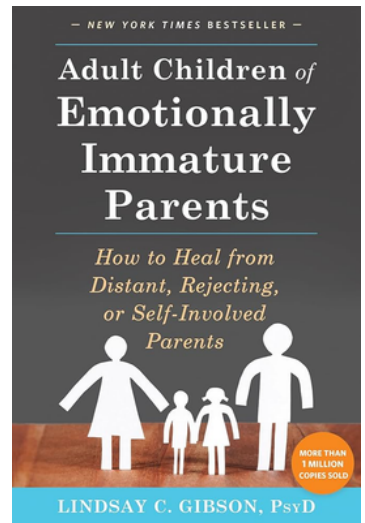
💡 ***Look to next month's newsletter to see what the most effective course of action might be!***

Volunteer Corner

Birthdays & Anniversaries

-  **July 1st** - Elli Reidinger
-  **July 2nd** - Lina Vergara Martinez
-  **July 9th** - Kim Painter
-  **July 10th** - Bert Boudet
-  **July 12th** - Diana Arnold
-  **July 17th** - Bridgett Milam-Crooks
-  **July 22nd** - Ann Sestrich
-  **July 24th** - Carolyn Burruss
-  **July 24th** - Kim Boudet **(7 years!)**
-  **July 28th** - Kristin Miller
-  **July 29th** - Melva Payne, Patti Ann Allen,
Jeni Smith **(4 years!)**
-  **July 31st** - Ann Sestrich

CASA Book Club June/July



Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: How to Heal from Distant, Rejecting, or Self-Involved Parents

by Lindsay C. Gibson

In this breakthrough book, clinical psychologist Lindsay Gibson exposes the destructive nature of parents who are emotionally immature or unavailable. You will see how these parents create a sense of neglect and discover ways to heal from the pain and confusion caused by your childhood. By freeing yourself from your parents' emotional immaturity, you can recover your true nature, control how you react to them, and avoid disappointment. Finally, you'll learn how to create positive, new relationships so you can build a better life.

***We'll be meeting at SliceAbility on
July 29th at 5:30PM!***

Let us know if you'll be there! - email
daniellesmithcasa@gmail.com

¿SE HABLA ESPAÑOL?

Do you know someone who is bilingual in Spanish and passionate about helping children and families? We're always looking to grow our CASA volunteer team—especially with Spanish-speaking advocates who can help us better support our community.

IF SOMEONE COMES TO MIND, CLICK HERE + SEND THEM THIS LINK FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Continuing Education

In-Person, Virtual, and Self-Guided Training Opportunities

(CLICK THE LINKS BELOW FOR ACCESS)

Online Trainings about Disabilities and Special Education

Special Needs and Medically Fragile Children: What you Need To Know

Georgia Center for Resources and Support

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Reading IEPs: Basics for CASA Advocates

Illinois CASA

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Supporting Children with Disabilities

Omni Inventive Care

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Autism and Trauma: Research Updates

Autism Research Institute

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Reminder →

- *Please remember to log your training in the tab marked “Training” on the main page in Optima- you need to log 12 hours of continuing education each year.*
- *Reading along with Book Club is now worth 4 CE hours!*



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CHANGE A CHILD'S
STORY

 **CASA**
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
FORSYTH COUNTY