

THE FORSYTH VOICE



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Training Superstar

CASA **Patti Ann Allen** is the 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! Be sure to log your training hours and you could be next quarter's superstar!

Upcoming Events

Thursday, November 6th
Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast
Browns Bridge Church | 9AM

Thursday, January 22nd
CASA Awareness Day
Statewide

Saturday, December 6th
Rudolph Run Through
Cumming First UMC | 11AM

Make sure you've RSVP'd!
Click HERE to register! Reach out
to your Advocacy Specialist if you
have any questions!



279.90 advocacy hours



25 hearings attended



3,017.90 miles driven

SEPTEMBER BY THE NUMBERS

September Monthly Recap

New CASAs Sworn In!

On September 25th, we swore in two new CASA volunteers, Denise and Heather, as well as our newest Advocacy Specialist, Ellie. We are so excited to see the impact they make on our families and communities!



Highlight

What Would You Do? Real-Life Advocacy Scenarios

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

You are assigned to a child with Down syndrome. At school visits, you notice the child is pulled from class frequently for therapies, but the foster parent mentions that the child still isn't receiving all the supports written into their IEP. The child enjoys social activities and being included with peers, but opportunities seem limited.

What would you do?



Next month's scenario:

In a case you are assigned to, the children are in foster care and the case plan lists safe and stable housing for the parent as a key goal for reunification. The parent is currently couch surfing between friends' homes, which makes it difficult to maintain employment, attend programs, and consistently meet with the children. The children are thriving in foster care, but progress toward reunification is slowed by the parent's unstable housing.

What would you do?

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

Here's how we recommend responding:

- **Review and advocate.** Start by reviewing the child's IEP to understand what supports are required. Speak with the foster parent and school staff to confirm which services are being provided and which are missing. If the IEP isn't being fully implemented, document your observations and advocate for compliance through the school, DFCS, or the court as needed.
- **Promote inclusion.** Because the child enjoys being around peers, encourage the team to explore inclusive classroom activities and community programs that match the child's interests and developmental level.
- **Focus on strengths.** Highlight the child's positive attitude and social motivation when communicating with the team. Framing recommendations around the child's strengths helps ensure supports are designed to help them thrive both academically and socially.

Sample court report recommendation: "CASA has observed that the child is frequently pulled from class for therapy sessions and may not be receiving all services outlined in their IEP. CASA recommends that the school ensure full implementation of the IEP and explore additional opportunities for inclusion in classroom and social activities to support the child's development and well-being."

The Prevalence of ADHD in Children in Foster Care

A study comparing Medicaid claims data for youth in foster care vs. non-foster care found that among foster children,

11.0% had an ADHD diagnosis vs. 6.1% of non-foster children.

The Overlap Between Trauma and ADHD

Many children in foster care show behaviors that look like ADHD—such as difficulty paying attention, being impulsive, or being very active. However, some of these behaviors may actually come from complex trauma, like exposure to abuse, domestic violence, or multiple unstable placements.

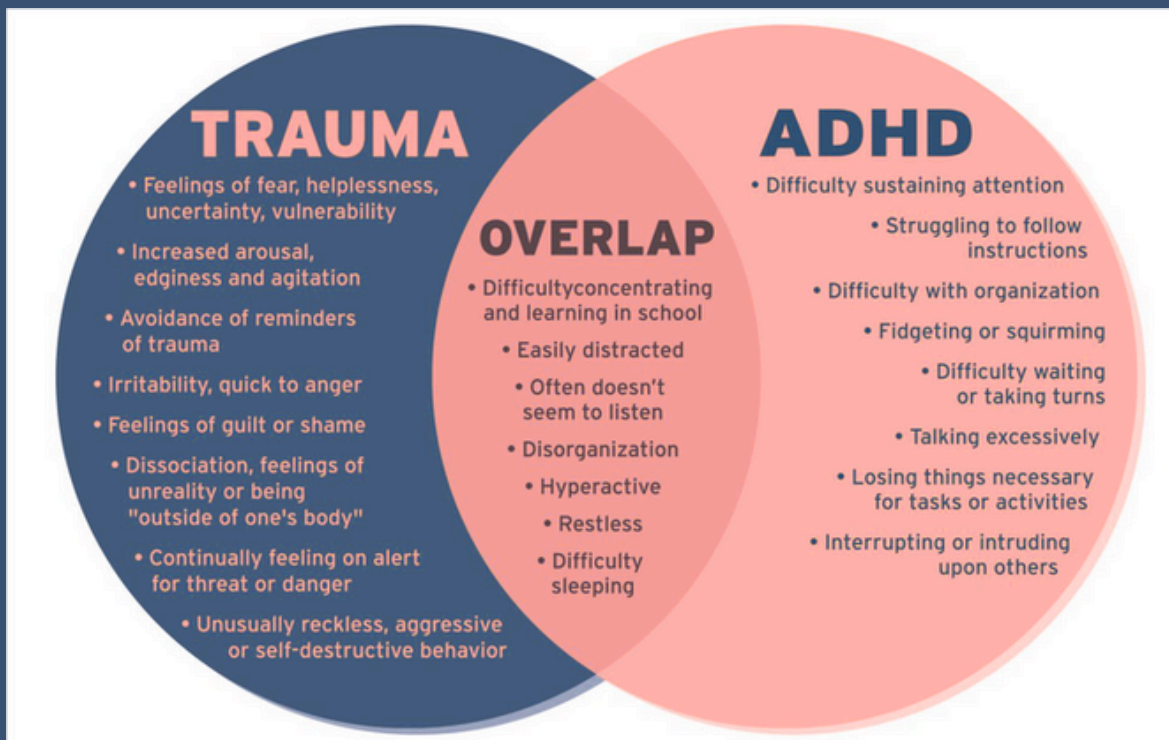
Trauma and ADHD can look very similar. For example:

- *A child who is anxious or constantly “on edge” from past trauma may appear hyperactive.*
- *A child who dissociates or withdraws may seem inattentive.*

Understanding the difference matters. Misreading trauma symptoms as ADHD (or vice versa) can lead to treatment that doesn’t fully address the child’s needs. CASA volunteers play a critical role by:

- *Observing and documenting behaviors carefully.*
- *Sharing insights with caseworkers, therapists, and educators.*
- *Asking whether evaluations for ADHD also consider trauma history.*
- *Advocating for trauma-informed care and support services.*

Early recognition and the right supports can help children regulate emotions, improve focus, and thrive in safe, stable environments.





Spotlight on Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence: How It Affects Children

Domestic violence (DV) is a broad term that refers to abuse occurring within a family or household, which can include child abuse, elder abuse, or abuse between partners. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a type of domestic violence specifically occurring between current or former romantic partners. Both can have serious impacts on children who witness or are exposed to the violence.

A recent study examined how Child Protective Services (CPS) responds to reports involving IPV. Using California data, researchers found that about one in five CPS reports (20.7%) included allegations of IPV. These reports were far less likely to be screened out—only 3.2% compared to 20.2% of non-IPV reports—and nearly half came from law enforcement sources.

Interestingly, IPV-related reports were more often substantiated but less likely to lead to foster care placement. This suggests that while CPS recognizes IPV as a serious concern, responses vary depending on whether physical abuse or neglect is also alleged.

CASA takeaway: *Children exposed to IPV may experience emotional, behavioral, or social challenges, even if they are not directly abused. During visits, provide a safe space for children to express their feelings, document observations, and advocate for supports that address both safety and emotional well-being.*

Birthdays & Anniversaries

🎂 Oct 6th - Kathleen Gizzi and Shelia Gunby
(each celebrating 11 years!)

🎂 Oct 7th - Toni Flowers (celebrating 23 years!)

🎂 Oct 11th - Emily Stowers

🎂 Oct 15th - Kathleen Gizzi and Jill Dell

🎂 Oct 18th - Molly Hevia (celebrating 15 years!)

🎂 Oct 22nd - Melva Payne

🎂 Oct 26th - Katie Magers, Christina Daniels, Jill Dell, Jennifer Giacobbe, and Carly Pace (each celebrating 2 years!)

🎂 Oct 27th - Joanna Dusseau

🎂 Oct 30th - Natalia Micheloud



Remember to RSVP to the annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast!

Thursday, November 6th is our annual volunteer appreciation breakfast at Browns Bridge Church, where we celebrate the amazing advocates serving Forsyth County. ***Check your email for an invite link, or click on the invitation below to RSVP!*** Reach out to your Advocacy Specialist if you have any questions.



CASA Tip of the Month

One of the most important ways CASA volunteers can support children is by being a consistent and reliable presence in their lives. Many children in foster care experience frequent changes—placements, schools, and caregivers—which can make them feel uncertain or unsafe. Your steady presence, even if it's just visiting once or twice a month, helps provide stability and reassurance.

During visits, show up on time, follow through on commitments, and engage in predictable routines. Even simple actions, like bringing a favorite activity or remembering details from previous visits, send a powerful message: "I am here for you, and you can count on me."

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!



Learning & Growth

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

ADHD Awareness Trainings

Putting on the Brakes: A guide to understanding ADHD

- On-Demand

Georgia Center for Resources and Support

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

ADHD, Children, and Digital Media

- On-Demand

Institute of Digital Media and Child Development

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Domestic Violence Awareness Trainings

Children Caught in Invisible Chains

- On-Demand

DomesticShelters.org

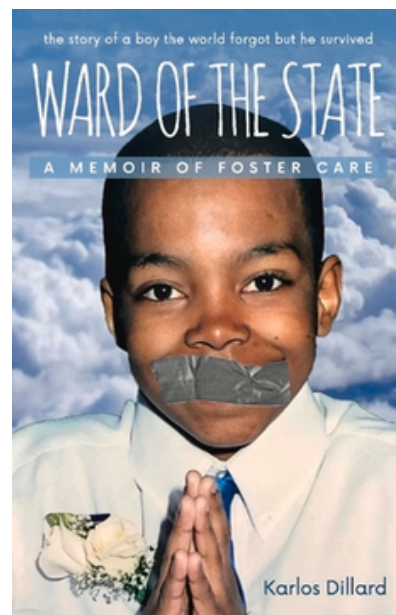
[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

CASA Book Club

Ward of the State: A Memoir Of Foster Care

by Karlos Dillard

This is the story of Karlos Dillard, severely neglected by his mother who often left him and his siblings at home alone for weeks to fend for themselves. Enduring severe neglect and abuse, the boy was removed by the State of Michigan and put into foster care. Karlos was removed from his mother's care just to end up in foster homes that treated him worse. The book is an emotional rollercoaster. Every time Karlos describes the pain he is feeling you will feel the same pain. Whether it be hunger, anger, or being sexually violated. Karlos' use of words makes sure that you aren't just reading the book, you are actually engaged. What is most enticing are the small victories experienced in the story because they give you a break from the horrors of some of the foster homes. Karlos was told he was not loved, he was not wanted and he was nothing but a ward of the State. Karlos had nothing left to look forward to and that almost ended his life, but his hope to find a family that loved him kept him alive.



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Danny Bennett

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Deer Creek Shores Presbyterian Church - George Lipsey - Hampton Family Charitable Fund Teleios Ministry -

Richard Warner - Georgia CASA Eggs Up Grill - Horizon Christian Academy Silvia Anderson - LEJ Capital -

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Unity Class of First Baptist Church - Bald Ridge Chapel Trustees

CHANGE A CHILD'S
STORY

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