

CASA KANE COUNTY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Provides best-interest advocacy for children as reflected in these guiding principles which recognize the importance of family preservation and reunification, equity, diversity, inclusion and collaboration.

Integrates these guiding principles into all aspects of program practices, policies and procedures.

Recognize the importance of family preservation and/or reunification:

- It is in a child's best interest to remain with their family of origin when safely possible.
- The program acknowledges that children experience trauma when separated from their family of origin.
- If a child is removed from their family of origin, it is in the child's best interest to be reunified with their family of origin as soon as safely possible.
- If a child is removed from their family of origin, it is in the child's best interest to be placed with a relative as the next best option whenever safely possible.
- Strengthening families, through recommendations for services, supports, visitation and communications, is in the child's best interest to achieve stability and/or reunification.
- The program requires and demonstrates respect for the parents and all parties associated with the case.
- The program ensures that information regarding the family's strengths is incorporated into reports to the court.
- The program ensures that information regarding the child's wishes is incorporated into reports to the court.
- Only when a court determines a child cannot be safely reunified with their family of origin in a reasonable timeframe, then another permanent placement is in a child's best interest.

Recognize the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion:

- All children regardless of age, race, ethnicity, national origin (ancestry), color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability or physical challenge should be safe, have a permanent home and an opportunity to thrive.
- The program acknowledges the existence of implicit bias and takes steps to minimize and/or eliminate implicit bias.
- Demonstrates an understanding of disproportionality impacting children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Recognize the importance of collaboration:

- The CASA/GAL program's governing body and the program director, along with program staff and volunteers, cooperate and coordinate with other volunteer and public service agencies, the courts, community groups, families and individuals to:
 - a. Improve services for individual children and their families.
 - b. Advocate for needed change in the conditions which adversely affect the children served.

Provides orientation, training, and continuing education for staff, volunteers and nonprofit governing board members about these guiding principles.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Commits to diversity, equity and inclusion and demonstrates these qualities in its own operations, governance, management, and quality advocacy for children.

Elements of Practice:

Works to diversify its staff, volunteers and governing body to reflect the population and meet the needs of the children served.

- Written goals and strategies are adopted to diversify the program's staff, volunteers and governing body to reflect the population of children served.
- Written goals and strategies are adopted to promote equity and inclusion of diverse staff, volunteers and for nonprofits, members of the governing body.
- Written goals are measurable and reviewed by the governing body to assess progress, at least annually, as part of the program evaluation process.
- The governing body identifies new goals and strategies, as needed, for program planning.
- The program engages in collaborative efforts with its state CASA/GAL organization to foster diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The program staff, volunteers and governing body engage in trainings, continuing education or educational activities related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The program engages individuals who can:
 - a. Help the program identify and understand the needs of the children served.
 - b. Identify the actions the program can take to address these needs in governance, recruitment, training, supervision, retention evaluation and advocacy.

Promotes equity and inclusion through its governance, management, operations, recruitment, continuing education, retention and advocacy policies and practices.

Commits to understanding disproportionality and disparate outcomes.

- Engages in activities to increase the awareness and understanding of volunteers, staff and governing body members regarding issues of racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes within its local child welfare and court systems.
- Participates with child welfare providers and court representatives in identifying and understanding their community’s issues of racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes.
- Works in partnership with child welfare providers and court representatives to address issues of racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes.
- Collects and reviews data which may include: race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation, and disability data for the children served to inform the program about disproportionality and disparate outcomes.

Promotes a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace:

- The program is inclusive and actively recruits qualified staff reflective of the children served.
- The program administers its human resources practices without discrimination based upon age, race, ethnicity, national origin (ancestry), color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability or physical challenge.
- The program's staff recruitment and selection practices are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- The program is in compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.
- The program has written equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies which clearly state its practices in recruiting, selecting and promoting staff.
- The program publicizes its equal opportunity policy in their staff recruitment materials.
- The program makes an effort to ensure the workplace is free of barriers which restrict the employment of or use by physically challenged staff, volunteers and others.

I (print name) _____, have read and agree with the CASA Guiding Principles as stated above.

Signature Date

- Board Member
- Volunteer
- Staff

