

Advocacy Protocol -Volunteers

June 2020

CASA of Galveston County's priority is the safety and well-being of the children we serve as well as our staff, volunteers, and the families and partners we encounter. As we begin to lift the current in-person visitation restrictions, we want to ensure we are looking out for the best interests of all persons involved. In developing these guidelines, we continue to review Texas and National CASA guidelines as well recommendations from local health and emergency officials in Galveston County.



Safety Plans for Visitation with Children and Families

Every effort should be made to “see” the child(ren) as often as possible. “See” means that you are remaining in contact with your child(ren) on a regular basis and are physically able to see the child(ren) either through use of video technology or in person pursuant to the guidelines established herein.

1. Visits may remain via technology (i.e. video conferencing, Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc.) at this time and we encourage the use of same. If video technology is not available, phone calls will be allowed under the following circumstances:
 - a. Contact logs are kept.
 - b. Contact logs include detailed information describing the unavailability of video visitation and/or the issues present that make video visitation unworkable.
2. There will not be out of state visits at this time.
3. For in-state in-person advocacy, Advocates may voluntarily decide to make in person visits by agreeing to the following guidelines:
 - The Advocate understands and acknowledges they are not being required to participate in in-person visits at this time.
 - The Advocate agrees they are returning to their in-person advocacy work of their own choice.
 - The advocate will obtain permission from the placement to enter the home/shelter/RTC. If it is necessary to enter the home due to safety concerns all CDC and EPA recommendations should be followed to limit the exposure to COVID-19
 - The Advocate will carefully consider where the visit takes place and specifically agrees to the following:
 - a) All visits will take place outside if available and appropriate
 - b) If the Advocate is not able to visit with the child(ren) outside (i.e. inclement weather, no outside space available, etc.), the Advocate will visit with the child(ren) indoors but NOT in a group setting.
 - The Advocate will answer the CDC Screening Questions (listed below) before attending any visitation, and if the answer is “yes” to any of the questions listed, then the Advocate will not participate in in-person visits until such time the Advocate has been symptom free for a period of at least 14 days.
 - The advocate will ask the following CDC Screening Questions of the placement before entering the home:
 - a) *Does anyone in the home have any of the following?*
 - i. Fever
 - ii. Shortness of breath (not severe)

- iii. Cough
- iv. Chills
- v. Repeated shaking with chills
- vi. Muscle pain
- vii. Headache
- viii. Sore throat
- ix. New loss of taste or smell
- x. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- xi. New confusion or inability to arouse
- xii. Bluish lips or face

b) Is anyone ill, or caring for someone who is ill?

If the placement caregiver answers “yes to any of the questions listed herein, then the Advocate will not participate in the in-person visit.

- There will be no physical contact with anyone including the child.
- There will remain a distance of at least 6 feet between the advocate and any other person they encounter including the child.
- The advocate will wear a mask. CASA of Galveston County will provide masks as needed for all Advocates and placement providers.
- The advocate will keep a log of every person they encounter while performing their advocacy role.
- Advocates will follow all CDC protocols for personal hygiene, including washing hands with soap and water and or using hand sanitizer that meets the guidelines for effectiveness of reducing COVID-19.

If an Advocate is unable to use video technology or in-person visits to “see” a child and the Advocate feels a telephone call is not sufficient to determine the health and well-being of a child, the Advocate will discuss same with his/her case supervisor immediately.

By signing this document, the Advocate understands they have read and understand the guidelines and requirements set forth, and the Advocate agrees that any in-person advocacy is voluntary and of their own choosing. The Advocate agrees to follow the safety plan in place to ensure reduced risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19. The Advocate further understands these guidelines are subject to change as information becomes available that may restrict or broaden our advocacy, and if these guidelines are updated, an updated acknowledgement will be required.

Advocate Name: _____

Advocate Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

This acknowledgement will be placed in the Advocates Volunteer File in Optima for reference.