

In the United States, more children die from child abuse and neglect than any other single leading cause of death.

Child abuse is reported every 10 seconds in America—child protective service agencies receive approximately 5.5 million referrals for children weekly. Actual rates of abuse are estimated to be three times higher.

The total annual direct costs of child abuse and neglect in the United States exceeded \$24 billion in 2004. The total indirect annual costs of child abuse and neglect in the United States reached nearly \$70 billion in 2004.

More than 75% of the children killed by abuse are three years old and under. Nearly 45% are under the age of one.

Approximately 80% of child abusers are the children's own parent.

Infants are the fastest growing segment of children in foster care.

Colorado ranks 3rd in the nation for deaths resulting from child abuse. Colorado's state funding to battle child abuse ranks among the lowest in the nation.

Jefferson County ranks 1st in the number of dependency and neglect filings in the State of Colorado. Filings have increased 150% in the past five years.

“To give a child a **CASA** (volunteer advocate) is to give them a **voice**. To give them a voice is to give them **hope**, and to give them hope is to give them the **world**. ”

—PAMELA BUTLER
FORMER FOSTER CARE CASA CHILD



You can be the

difference



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What is Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)?

CASA was one judge's answer to a recurring problem in his courtroom—an idea and an organization that subsequently changed America's judicial procedure and the lives of more than one million children.

In 1976, Superior Court Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington recruited and trained his first team of community volunteers to step into courtrooms on behalf of our most valuable and vulnerable possession—our children. CASA was established and became the voice for abused and neglected children: ordinary citizens willing to go behind the doors of juvenile and family courts, to ease the pain and trauma of children in crisis and to investigate and offer the judge invaluable case information, ensuring that the system was accountable and upheld the best interests of children.

Today there are 950 National CASA programs in the United States. More than 50,000 volunteers advocate for the best interests of nearly 200,000 foster children.

Jefferson and Gilpin Counties established a CASA program in October 2000. More than 200 volunteers have been trained and sworn in as Officers of the Court, lending aid to nearly 500 children.



What is a CASA Volunteer and What Do They Do?

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a specially trained volunteer appointed by a judge to serve as an independent voice for an abused or neglected child. Entering the court system is a confusing and frightening experience for children. In a system that must be responsive to many concerns, the voices of child victims are often lost. CASA volunteers work first, last and always in the best interests of children.

CASA volunteers are assigned to one or two cases and advocate for safe, permanent homes for abused and neglected children. Through regular contact and strong, caring relationships, children learn that there is someone who listens and cares. A CASA volunteer will participate in the court process and monitor the child's case until permanency is reached.

Who is CASA?

CASA volunteers are concerned, supportive community members with a variety of professional, educational and ethnic backgrounds. Anyone can be a part of CASA.

CASA volunteers must be at least 21 years old and pass a background check and screening. No special experience is necessary—just a sincere desire to speak up for a child and a willingness to commit to the program for 18 months. All advocates receive expert training. The average involvement by a CASA volunteer is 15 hours per month.

CASA members are individuals and organizations that make a financial commitment to the organization and the abused and neglected children it serves.

CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We rely on private funding sources to remain operational. We are not a government agency and have no political, religious or ethnic affiliation.

