



CASA of Monterey County

QUICK FACTS

26 Years of Serving Monterey County's Children in Foster Care!

ABOUT US

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is the only organization providing rights-based advocacy for children in foster care in Monterey County. We are one of over 1,000 organizations who are all part of the nearly 40 year-old National CASA organization.

In 2017, there were over 2,400 reported incidents of child abuse in Monterey County, of which 400 were substantiated. Nationally, the total annual direct and indirect cost of child abuse and neglect is estimated to be over 80 billion dollars.

There are currently over 414 children in foster care in Monterey County, and an average of 90 children waiting for a court appointed special advocate (CASA).

HOW IT WORKS

After a minimum of 35 hours of training, CASAs are sworn in by the dependency court judge, and assigned to one or more children in foster care. CASAs are an extension of the Superior Court and report to the judges of the Dependency Branch of Superior Court. CASAs partner with other providers to help find a permanent home for the children as quickly as possible.

WHAT WE DO

CASAs befriend an assigned child and watch over the child's progress in their foster placement, at school, in therapy, and where applicable, in reunification efforts with their parents or original care givers. Each advocate is supported by a CASA advocate supervisor.

CASA programs have proven effectiveness and because of this Monterey dependency court judges strongly support the work of CASA as this 2013 quote from dependency court Judge Robert Moody shows: *"There have been cases that have turned on the recommendations of the CASA worker. Without the information the CASA was able to supply, we would have made decisions half-armed."* – Judge Robert Moody.

CHILDREN WITH A CASA HAVE BETTER OUTCOMES

They spend 7.5 months less in foster care, experience fewer out of home placements, and have improved educational performance.

The following 2014 statistics of foster children for whom Monterey County CASA holds educational rights shows very positive results.

- 83% of those we advocated for had improved school attendance.
- 74% had improved grades.
- 70% of the high school students improved the total number of credits toward graduation.

Nationally over 90% of children with CASA volunteers never re-enter the child welfare system. Children with CASA volunteers, and their families, receive more court ordered services and those services are more carefully targeted and monitored.

CASA MAKES FINANCIAL SENSE

Nationally, CASA volunteers save hundreds of millions of dollars in child welfare costs. Federal law requires that juvenile and family courts appoint a guardian ad litem (this may be an attorney or CASA) in all cases of child abuse and neglect. The child welfare system is unable to afford to provide a comparable level of advocacy through non-volunteer approaches. In 2013, nationwide, CASA volunteers contributed 5.75 million advocacy hours, equivalent to \$290 million in taxpayer dollars (if compensated for their service).