

Social Networking, “Friending” and Photographing Children

The CASA Program believes that the various social media outlets are powerful tools to increase public awareness and display a sense of community. Social media is also used to show support, encouragement and recognize the efforts of those who are engaged in advocacy for abused and neglected children. When utilizing any of the social networking sites, CASA Program staff and CASA Volunteers are prohibited from sharing any confidential information about caseworkers which they are involved or have previously been involved.

CASA Volunteers must use discretion before posting information or comments. CASAs should always be respectful of others and considerate when posting topics which might be viewed as objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics, religion, etc. Once information is posted online, it can potentially be viewed by anyone and may not be retractable. Keep in mind that content or communication on government-related social networking pages i.e. CASA Program Facebook, may be considered public records.

When sharing CASA Stories to illustrate the value of CASA advocacy for children, CASA Program staff and CASA volunteers will respect the rights and privacy of the children and families by not providing identifiable information or details about current cases, which might be recognizable to the family or others associated with the family or case, unless permission has been granted, i.e. adoption finalization photographs, CASA volunteer achievements, etc.

CASA Program staff and CASA volunteers must always be mindful of security and privacy, before linking to personal pages, posting, sharing links, and “friending” others. CASA volunteers should be careful when considering to “friend” CASA children or families you may encounter in your capacity with the CASA program. Before “friending” a CASA child and/or families of the CASA children, the CASA will discuss this matter with their Coordinator. The office discourages this kind of interaction. If cleared by your Coordinator, CASA volunteers should also notify the DCFS caseworker as soon as possible about “friending” a CASA child to ensure the caseworker has approved the child’s use of social media.

Children in foster care cannot be identifiably photographed or recorded by the media, without prior approval by DCFS or if they have been legally freed for adoption. CASA volunteers are allowed to take photos of their CASA children during outings, to capture special moments in the child’s life. These photographs can only be shared with the CASA children, the foster parents, DCFS, Guardian ad Litem, the Courts and the natural parents. CASA volunteers shall not post or “tag” photos of CASA children or their families.

August 2019