

## **Utah CASA Policy: Social Networking, “Friending” and Photographing Children**

The CASA Program acknowledges that social media can be an effective tool for increasing public awareness, fostering community engagement, and recognizing the advocacy efforts of CASA volunteers and staff. However, CASA staff and volunteers must exercise discretion and professionalism when using social media or other public communication platforms. Protecting the confidentiality and dignity of the children and families served by the CASA Program is of the utmost importance.

### **Confidentiality and Social Media Use**

1. CASA staff and volunteers are strictly prohibited from sharing or posting any confidential or identifying information regarding CASA cases, children, or families, whether currently or previously assigned.
2. CASA volunteers must exercise sound judgment and maintain professionalism when posting or commenting online. Posts containing offensive, inflammatory, or controversial topics (e.g., political or religious commentary) should be avoided.
3. All content posted on official government-related CASA Program social media pages (e.g., CASA Facebook or Instagram accounts) may be considered public record and subject to disclosure under applicable laws.
4. Once content is posted on the internet, it may become publicly accessible and may not be retrievable or erasable. Volunteers are expected to consider this before posting.

### **Sharing CASA Stories**

1. When sharing stories or examples to highlight CASA advocacy, CASA staff and volunteers must respect the rights and privacy of the children and families involved.
2. No identifying information or details recognizable to the child, family, or others associated with the case may be shared.
3. Exceptions may be made only with written permission from the CASA Program and/or DCFS (e.g., adoption finalization photos or volunteer recognition posts).

### **“Friending” and Online Connections**

1. CASA staff and volunteers must remain mindful of privacy and professional boundaries when using social media to connect or communicate with others.
2. CASA volunteers are discouraged from “friending,” following, or otherwise connecting on social media with CASA children or the families of CASA children.

3. If a volunteer is considering “friending” or communicating online with a CASA child or family member, the volunteer must first discuss the matter with their CASA Coordinator.
4. If approved by the Coordinator, the volunteer must also notify the DCFS caseworker to confirm that the child’s use of social media is authorized.

### **Photographing and Recording Children**

1. Children in foster care may not be photographed, filmed, or recorded by the media without prior written approval from DCFS, unless they have been legally freed for adoption.
2. CASA volunteers may take personal photographs of their CASA children during visits or outings to capture special moments in the child’s life.
3. Such photographs may only be shared with:
  - The child
  - The foster parents or placement providers
  - DCFS
  - The Guardian ad Litem (GAL)
  - The court
  - The child’s biological parents (as appropriate)
4. CASA volunteers shall not post, share, or “tag” photographs or videos of CASA children or their families on any social media or public platform.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the **CASA Program Policy on Social Networking, “Friending,” and Photographing Children**. I understand that compliance with this policy is mandatory and that failure to follow the guidelines and requirements outlined above may result in disciplinary action, up to and including release from the CASA Program.

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name:\_\_\_\_\_