

# FAMILY LAW CASA POLICY TO OPTIMIZE VOLUNTEERS' SAFETY

1. The safety of all volunteers is a high priority for Family Law CASA.
2. Volunteers shall use an alias name. All CASA cases have the potential for safety concerns due to concerns regarding domestic violence, substance abuse and criminal history. Therefore, all volunteers should use an alias to protect against unforeseen safety concerns and unpredictable human behavior.
3. The personal email and cell phone number of volunteers should be kept private. An alternate email address and phone number should be created and utilized by all volunteers.
4. On all cases, visits to the parents' homes should only be done for the purpose of conducting the parent child observation and interview the children. The children should always be present during a home visit. In cases with heightened safety concerns, as determined by the Program Manager, no home visit should be conducted, even with the children present.
5. A criminal background check of the parents should be conducted by CASA staff before a home visit is scheduled. The advocate should conduct a short interview with the parent prior to conducting the home visit to ensure the children will be present and **inquire about weapons in the home.**
6. Each case should be screened for safety based on the criminal background check, pleadings filed in the case, and information gathered from the parents, collaterals and records/documents.
7. CASA staff will request to be discharged from any case that may compromise the advocate's safety.
8. Cases shall be flagged for safety considerations if a parent has a history of violent behavior, illegal weapon possession or sex crimes.
9. If a case is flagged for safety concerns, the program manager and the program attorney shall meet to discuss whether CASA should be discharged.