

Asking the Right Questions and Planning Your Next Steps Supplemental Materials

INITIAL INVESTIGATION PLAN

This worksheet is a helpful tool for creating your investigation plan. Remember, the plan for your investigation will be different in each case because each child's situation is unique.

Date of Next Court Hearing:		
Type/Purpose of Hearing:		
Court Report is Due:		
Questions I Would Like to Ask	Possible Sources of Information	Priority #
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J		

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

CHILD

Child Interviews

(Please note that it is not your role as a CASA/GAL volunteer to interview a child about the allegations, many of the children have been interviewed many times and additional interviews may be harmful to the child and to any potential criminal prosecution.)

Type of Information/Assistance

If the child is verbal:

- * History of the family situation
- Information about relationships (parents, families, foster families)
- Wishes and desires for the future
- Challenges or areas in need of help/cal records
- Likes/dislikes
- Information regarding visits with parents, siblings, other family
- Other _____
- Best way to contact source:

Child Observations

(Visits with parents, visits with siblings, child in current setting, child at school or daycare, etc.)

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Affect
- Moods, mood changes
- Developmental stages
- Verbal ability
- Relationships, interactions with others
- Intellectual ability
- Other _____

Best way to arrange observation:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

PARENTS & FAMILY

PARENTS

(When parents are represented by an attorney, follow program protocol before speaking with the parents.)

Type of Information/Assistance

- Their version of the events stated on the petition
- Omissions or extenuating circumstances they feel are important
- Their child's developmental milestones, joys, fear, etc.
- Specific information about the child's behavior related to:
 - Visitations with parents and siblings
 - Adjustments in school
 - Behavior problems and strengths
 - Medical concerns
- Adjustment to separation/loss
- Their background
- Other _____

Best way to contact source:

FAMILY

Type of Information/Assistance:

- What they've seen happening as it relates to life of the child
- Potential resources for the child and family
- Other _____

Best way to contact source:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

TRIBE

Parents

(Applies only if you are working with an Indian child as defined by the Indian Child Welfare Act.)

Type of Information/Assistance

- *Potential service resources*
- Tribal enrollment issues
- Potential transfer of jurisdiction
- Information regarding whether anyone is going to appear in court for the tribe and whether the tribe is going to formally intervene, send a representative or make a written recommendation, information regarding recommendations
- Potential cultural responses to the current family problem
- Extended family or members of the tribe who may be a potential placement alternative for the Indian child
- Other _____

Best way to contact source:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

PROFESSIONALS

CASA Case Supervisor

Your CASA Supervisor is the first contact for ANY case related question.

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Where the child is placed
- Documentation, case record
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of other principals in the case
- Contact information (e.g., for foster parents, parents, etc.)
- Community or educational resources
- Safety issues, if any
- Medical status of child
- Educational status of child
- Information regarding parent's involvement with Law Enforcement
- Anything else the CASA Volunteer should know

Department of Child Services

Caseworker

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Where the child is placed
- Documentation, case record
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of other principals in the case
- Contact information (e.g., for foster parents, parents, etc.)
- Community or educational resources
- Safety issues, if any
- Medical status of child
- Educational status of child

CASA Program Attorney

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Best way to contact source:
- Assistance with the legalities of the case
- Assistance with complex legal situations particular to the case
- Assistance in negotiating settlements in preparation for trial
- Filing of legal documents
- Subpoenas of witnesses

Department of Child Services Attorney

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Trial prep if subpoenaed for an evidentiary hearing

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

PROFESSIONALS

Child's Teacher or Childcare Provider

*** Must have a signed release from parents and the court order appointing CASA.**

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Child's behavior at school
- Educational problems or delays, strengths
- Changes in behavior
- Child's appearance
- Peer relationships
- Grades
- Parental involvement
- Likes/dislikes
- Attendance prior to/post removal
- School nurse reports
- School counselor reports
- IEP - Individualized Education Plan

Foster Parents & Independent Living Coordinators

Type of Information/Assistance:

Specific information about the child's daily life and about the child's behavior related to:

- Visits with parents and siblings
- Adjustments in school
- Behavior problems and strengths
- Medical concerns
- Contacts made by parents through letters, phone calls, etc.
- Child's daily functioning
- Adjustment to separation/loss

Foster Parents can give information to CASA, but are not considered "parties to the case" and cannot be given information.

Attorneys for the Parents

CASA Volunteers have limited contact with parents' attorneys.

Service Providers

Examples:

- Home-based Caseworker
- Visitation Supervisor
- Therapist
- Wraparound Case Manager
- Behavioral Consultant
- Etc.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

PROFESSIONALS

Medical Personnel

**** Must have a signed release from parents and the court order appointing CASA.***

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Child's medical condition as related to the abuse and/or neglect
- Past medical history, medical records
- Follow-up services that may be required to address medical conditions resulting from abuse and/or neglect
- A particular medical condition that should come to the attention of the caseworker, foster parents, courts, etc.
- Contact with parent(s), if any

Psychological/Psychiatric Professionals

**** Must have a signed release from parents and the court order appointing CASA.***

Type of Information/Assistance:

- Nature of referral information they received
- How they came to a particular conclusion
- What the diagnosis means in practical terms and how progress is measured
- Discrepancies in opinion
- Possible counseling or therapeutic models being recommended for the child, parents, family, etc.