



CASA of Orange County

Importance of CASA

Each year, nearly a million children are confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect in our nation.

Children in Orange County's Foster Care System

- Last year alone, there were 27,704 reports of child abuse filed in our community.
- On any given day, there are over 3,000 children in Orange County's foster care system who have been removed from their parents due to abuse, abandonment or neglect.
- Children placed in foster care have suffered Abandonment or Neglect (45%), Physical Abuse (26%), Sexual Abuse (16%) and Emotional Abuse (13%).
- While in the overburdened system, children have few or no consistent relationships, are frequently moved between foster/group homes and quickly fall far behind in school.
- With no active parents in their lives and a Juvenile Dependency Judge who is responsible for making life-changing decisions for 600-800 children, it is easy for these children and teens' individual needs to be overlooked and neglected.

Without help, these children are at high risk for homelessness, unemployment, incarceration, mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse.

- Statistics reveal a bleak outlook for children who end up emancipating or "aging out" of the system at age 18. Half are unemployed, a third have not finished high school and end up in jail and a quarter become homeless.
- Children who have been abused are 38% more likely to commit violent crimes as adults and are about 33% more likely to abuse their own kids
- These kids are twice as likely to have mental illness as adults. A recent study by the Casey Family Programs found that 54% of former foster-care children had one or more mental-health disorders in adulthood compared with 22% in the general population.

CASA volunteers provide the hope, inspiration and guidance that these children need to successfully overcome their abusive past and achieve a positive future.

Homelessness → Safe Home
Dropout → High School Graduate

Unemployed → Successful Career
Incarcerated → Productive citizen

"A CASA volunteer provides me with insight and information that, in many cases, is the difference between success and failure in a child's life. I know of no greater service."

Commissioner Gary L. Vincent, Orange County Juvenile Dependency Court

