

# Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteers

Please review the following competency checklist. As you review each area, note whether it is a current strength or if it is an area that needs further development.

Volunteer Name:

Date:

CATEGORY	KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES	CURRENT	DEVELOP
<b>CASA/GAL ROLE</b>	Knows how to define the CASA/GAL role		
	Understands the function of a CASA/GAL report to the court		
	Understands the competencies necessary to succeed as a CASA/GAL volunteer		
	Knows how to act within the CASA/GAL volunteer role and can differentiate their role from that of others involved in the case		
	Knows how to find support and resources to assist their advocacy		
	Understands how to obtain relevant confidential information		
	Understands the importance of partnering with their supervisor to develop goals, discuss issues and assess progress		
	Understands the importance of participating in ongoing professional development to strengthen advocacy skills		
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	Knows how to effectively articulate a point of view while advocating for the needs of the child(ren)		
	Understands the importance of establishing trust and rapport with all parties		
	Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely		
	Knows how to work collaboratively and manage conflict effectively		
	Recognizes the importance of treating others with dignity and respect		
	Knows how to be an active listener		
	Understands and respects the perspectives, values and input from others		
	Knows the importance of being forthright, thorough and detail oriented		
	Knows how to utilize basic communication and interviewing skills		
	Knows strategies for interviewing children		
	Understands the elements of a court report		

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CATEGORY	KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES	CURRENT	DEVELOP
<b>CULTURAL COMPETENCE</b>	Understands the extent to which cultural institutions and values may oppress, marginalize, or alienate some individuals or groups and create or enhance the privilege and power of others		
	Understands and demonstrates self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values when working with diverse groups		
	Knows strategies and steps to take to increase cultural competency skills and demonstrate culturally competent child advocacy		
	Understands how to recognize and challenge own biases		
	Understands the root causes of disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system and the disparate outcomes children of color experience		
	Knows how to be sensitive and responsive to cultural differences		
<b>INITIATIVE</b>	Knows how to be self-motivated and work independently		
	Understands the importance of being resourceful and identifying needs as well as services to meet the needs		
	Recognizes the importance of ensuring all parties are moving expeditiously toward permanency		
	Knows the importance of persistence in pursuit of information		
	Understands the need to advocate for access to quality, individualized services		
	Understands the need to respectfully challenge the status quo		
	Recognizes the importance of creating innovative strategies to resolve issues		
<b>SELF-CARE</b>	Understands the importance of healthy coping strategies to prevent burn out		
	Understands the importance of being aware of personal limitations		
	Understands the importance of setting clear, healthy boundaries and can identify indicators of stress		
	Understands the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle		
	Understands the importance of knowing when to ask for and accept help		
	Understands the importance of maintaining a sense of hope and optimism		

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CATEGORY	KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES	CURRENT	DEVELOP
SOUND JUDGMENT	Knows how to set healthy boundaries and respects the boundaries of others		
	Knows how to adhere to all policies, ethical guidelines and procedures		
	Recognizes the importance of flexibility in handling case-related changes		
	Understands managing challenges by collaborating based on the best interest of the child(ren)		
	Knows how to maintain objectivity and avoid making assumptions		
	Understands the importance of anticipating and recognizing potential problems		
	Understands making appropriate, fact-based recommendations to the court		
	Understands basing decisions on a thorough review of the information		
	Understands evaluating alternative decisions		
	Understands the confidentiality requirements of being a CASA/ GAL volunteer		
	Understands that personal values and biases about mental illness, domestic violence and substance abuse can affect objectivity		
	Knows how to evaluate what is in the child(ren)'s best interest		
FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE	Understands the importance of using a strength-based approach		
	Understands concurrent planning		
	Understands advocacy differs depending on the age of the child		
	Understands the options for permanency for a child		
	Understands how to identify a child's basic needs		
	Understands the cycle of attachment		
	Understands possible reactions to separation and loss		
	Understands age-appropriate behavior and development for children of all ages		
	Understands how mental illness impacts families		
	Understands the factors that contribute to a child's resilience		
	Understands how poverty can impact families and children		

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<b>FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE</b>	Understands strategies to advocate for children and adolescents with mental health disorders		
	Understands the ways that substance abuse can affect children and families		
	Knows the importance of being aware of resources in the community that assist with substance abuse		
	Understands how domestic violence affects children and families		
	Understands the nature and scope of trauma and how it affects children		
	Understands the importance of resilience in overcoming trauma in children		
	Knows strategies to address educational challenges		
	Understands the issues faced by LGBTQ youth in the child welfare system		
	Understands the risk factors for child abuse and neglect		
	Understands possible reactions to separation and loss		
	Recognizes the importance of understanding a child's journey through the child welfare system		
	Understands Minimum Sufficient Level (MSL) of Care and its importance in best interest		
	Understands the nature and scope of the roles of others in court system (e.g., caseworkers, attorneys, therapists, etc.)		
	Knows the importance of the federal laws that impact their advocacy		
Understands what constitutes abuse and neglect			