

FOSTERING FUTURES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND TERMINOLOGY

The following principles guide your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer. As you advocate for adolescent youth who are making preparations to emancipate from the foster care system, keep in mind the specific ways these principles apply

WORKING WITH OLDER YOUTH-GUIDING PRINCIPLES	
TERM	DEFINITION
Best Interest of the Child:	Guides your work with older youth who are aging out of the system. For young children the focus is on permanency in home where adults will take care of children’s needs. For older youth the goal is to connect the youth to at least one caring, committed adult who will be a long-term support person for the youth. As a CASA/GAL the advocate must think about who will form the supportive network that the older youth will need once he/she ages out of foster care.
Role of the CASA/GAL Volunteer:	Four primary activities on each case: Assessment, facilitation, advocacy, and monitoring. When working with an older youth, it is important to partner with the youth to carry out these activities.
Responsibilities of the CASA/GAL Volunteer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review records interview the youth and other appropriate parties in the case Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the youth and ordered by the court Submit court reports with recommendations Maintain complete records about the youth and case (remember all case notes must be returned to the CASA/GAL program when the case has closed) <p>NOTE: The youth’s permanent plan is independence so your focus shifts from ensuring that resources and services are in place to prepare the youth for successful independent living.</p>
CASA/GAL Volunteer’s Relationship with the child:	<p>Older youth should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involved in their case Partnering with and guiding you in your CASA/GAL volunteer work. <p>The volunteer-youth relationship cannot be prescribed. Some youth</p>

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TERM	DEFINITION
	<p>may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need frequent contact with you. • Prefer to get to know and trust you on a social level before they will open up • Be resistant to building a relationship with yet another adult for fear of being let down again
Relationship Boundaries with Children and Families:	<p>When working with younger children, your contact with children typically ends when they are returned to (or placed in) a safe, permanent home. However, CASA/GAL volunteers have sometimes maintained long-term contact with older youth whom they were previously appointed to serve. Your legal role and appointment ends when the youth ages out of the system and the youth is legally an adult.</p> <p>NOTE: Once your formal volunteer role has ended, interactions with the youth are no longer under the auspices of the CASA/GAL program and are not protected by judicial immunity or state or federal volunteer protection laws.</p>
Minimum Sufficient Level of Care:	<p>When working with older youth, your focus shifts from the parents' abilities and skills to the youth's abilities, skills and resources.</p>

TERMINOLOGY

TERM	DEFINITION
Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views the world from an adult perspective • Minimizes the perspective of youth • Teaches youth "learned helplessness" and instills a lack of motivation
Aging Out	<p>The process of a youth transitioning from the formal control of the foster care system towards independent living.</p>

TERMINOLOGY	
TERM	DEFINITION
Interdependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult form of attachment • Network of relationships characterized by both giving and receiving. Recognizing that each person brings both strengths and needs to the relationship. • A Community of people who know each other and rely upon each other • Strengthening, enhancing and flexible • Holding someone without holding on to him or her • Exists in the intersection of independent-living skills and permanence
Positive Youth Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes the strengths and capacities of youth • Views youth as a resource • Involves youth in every aspect of their care • Allows for opportunities for youth to take on leadership and decision-making roles • Recognizes that adolescents are all in transition developmentally, whether they are in foster care or not. <p><i>*Using a positive youth development approach means viewing the youth as a resource not a problem.*</i></p>