

Preparing to Verbally Answer Questions

OJJDP

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***This session is being recorded**

CASA GAL
Court Appointed Special Advocates
Guardians ad Litem
FOR CHILDREN

Welcome

Panelists:

Honorable Darlene Byrne, Chief Justice, Third Court of Appeals, Austin, Texas

Honorable Jerilyn Borack (Ret.), Assignment Judge, California Superior Court, Sacramento, California

Honorable Michael Dickinson, Judge, Harrison County Youth Court, Biloxi, Mississippi

Honorable Amanda N. Heath, Augusta Circuit Superior Court, Augusta, Georgia



Description and Purpose of Webinar

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- This is the third webinar in the Judicial Perspective webinar series.
- The webinar will focus on the questions that judges would like CASA/GAL volunteers to ask when gathering information to report and make recommendations to the court to help the judge make the most well-informed decisions as to what is in the best interests of the child or youth.
- The panel of judges will provide insight into what they see as most important when providing verbal communications to the judge at court hearings.

Panel Discussion and Questions



Before providing verbal information to the judge, what should the CASA/GAL program and volunteer know about the court and the state and local laws and policies?

Who else will be in the courtroom when the CASA/GAL volunteer provides verbal information?



What is the purpose of the verbal communication to the court?

Testimony? Sworn in by judge?

Respond to questions from the judge about the CASA/GAL report? Respond to others? Offer new information?

Presentation of new and supplemental information to the report that was previously submitted ?

Other?



Will the CASA/GAL volunteer be questioned by the judge, department/case worker, attorneys for child and/or parent?

If so, how and why?



How can the CASA/GAL prepare to verbally answer questions in court?

Who should they meet with to prepare?

How do they decide on the most important points to mention?

Should they rehearse their verbal presentation?

Any tips for dealing with anxiety and nervousness?



What are some courtroom basics?

Demeanor?

Knowing the report and recommendations without having to read them in court?

Professional appearance?



In all situations where CASA/GAL volunteer is providing verbal answers to questions in court, what should the CASA/GAL volunteer do?

Listen to the question?

Only answer the question asked?

Stop talking if judge asks you to do so?



If giving actual testimony, what should the CASA/GAL volunteer know?

Rules of evidence?

Hearsay?

Standards of proof?

When to stop testifying if attorney objects?

Summary and Wrap-up

Thank You