

A View From The Bench: Working with Older Youth

OJJDP

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***This session is being recorded**

CASA GAL
Court Appointed Special Advocates
Guardians ad Litem
FOR CHILDREN

Welcome

Panel Members:

Honorable Jerilyn Borack, T.A.J.P. (Ret.)
Superior Court of California, Sacramento County, Sacramento, California

Honorable Sheila Calloway, Davidson County Juvenile Court
Nashville, Tennessee

Honorable Laurie Clark, Denver Juvenile Court, Denver, Colorado

Moderator:

Honorable Sallyanne Floria, A.J.S.C. (Ret.)
Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex County, New Jersey



Description



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- This session will focus on older youth in child welfare court cases, and the questions that judges would like CASA/GAL volunteers to ask when gathering information to report and make recommendations to the court as to what is in the best interests of the youth.
- Presenters will provide an overview of relevant federal, state and local laws and practices relating to older youth, and information on National CASA/GAL's *Fostering Futures Initiative*.
- Presenters will also share tools and resources and discuss best practices from around the country.

Framing the Discussion

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Older youth in foster care are one of the most vulnerable populations in this country. They are less likely to reach a permanent home and may languish in the foster care system for years before aging out, which happens to nearly 20,000 young people every year.

Suddenly, these youth are expected to make it on their own as independent adults. Some leave foster care and become homeless on day one. Many never graduate from high school. Most are underemployed, and even later, at age 26, they earn less than half what their peers do, on average.

Panel Discussion and Questions



Panel Discussion and Questions

What is the definition of older youth?

How can the CASA/GAL volunteer promote the objectives of the Family First Prevention Services Act?

What information does a judge want from the CASA/GAL volunteer regarding older youth? How does the CASA/GAL program/volunteer learn what information the judge wants included in their reports?





Panel Discussion and Questions

How can the CASA/GAL volunteer serve in a mentorship role for older youth aging out of the system?

How can a CASA/GAL volunteer continue a relationship and provide advice to the youth beyond the youth's 18th birthday? Federal/State law? If the state permits extended foster care, what are the benefits that the CASA/GAL volunteer should know about? What is the CASA/GAL policy for remaining after the youth's 18th birthday?

Can a youth opt in for voluntary support after they age out of the system and continue appointment of CASA/GAL volunteer?



Panel Discussion and Questions

How can a CASA/GAL volunteer assist an older youth with complex needs (housing, financial stability, physical and mental health, education, etc.)?

How can a CASA/GAL volunteer assist with locating extended family members or fictive kin? How can a CASA/GAL volunteer assist in renewing/maintaining/expanding contact with extended family members?





Panel Discussion and Questions

Should the court schedule more frequent hearings to address the needs of youth aging out of the system? At what age should the court start scheduling more frequent hearings?

How can a CASA/GAL volunteer help the youth understand that their voice is important? How can a CASA/GAL volunteer help youth prepare for a hearing with the judge?

How can a CASA/GAL volunteer help youth by making recommendations to the court about any special education needs, social security benefits they may qualify for, transitional services, and higher education and technical/trade school benefits that may be available, including housing while in school?

Fostering Futures



Fostering Futures

- To help every young person achieve their potential, the National CASA/GAL Association offers Fostering Futures, a curriculum designed to strengthen our service to the older youth we already serve, expand our services to more youth preparing to age out of foster care, and ensure that foster care alumni have the support they need to thrive as adults.
- National CASA/GAL believes that high school graduation, living wage employment, a place to live, and a healthy, thriving adulthood are within reach of every youth aging out of foster care, and we know that a caring, consistent adult can make all the difference.

Fostering Futures

- We also know that young adults need support as they navigate independence. Youth who age out of foster care without permanency are no exception. They need someone by their side to offer guidance, help them work through challenges, and celebrate their successes. No one should have to figure it all out on their own.
- Fostering Futures is a structured, research-informed curriculum that equips local programs and volunteers with practical tools and strategies to intentionally support older youth in foster care as they prepare for adulthood.

Summary and Wrap-up

Upcoming Webinars

Next in this series:

A View From the Bench: Topic TBD

Audience: CASA/GAL Staff and Volunteers

Tentative date: Friday, June 26 || 11:00am PT || 2:00pm ET

Visit the Member Portal

<https://member.nationalcasagal.org/>

Latest schedule: [Events Calendar](#)

Past session materials and recordings:
[Webinars](#)

Additional webinars:

Quarterly Local Program Standards Training – Q2

Audience: Local program staff

Monday, May 18 || 10:00am PT || 1:00pm ET

Quarterly State Standards Training – Q3

Audience: State organization staff

Monday, July 20 || 10:00am PT || 1:00pm ET





Thank You