



CASA OF WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS Guidelines for Visiting with Children

- Respect the child(ren). Don't talk down to the child(ren). Don't criticize them or their parents. Respond honestly to their questions. If you don't know, say so.
- Respect the child(ren)'s developmental stage. Use words and phrases the children will understand. Be sensitive to their attention span.
- Respect the child(ren)'s need for safety. Allow trust to develop by allowing a trusted person to remain during the first (few) meetings if the child(ren) prefer. Keep meetings non-threatening and make sure the child(ren) are comfortable.
- Respect the child(ren)'s attachment to parents. The parent-child bond is strong, even in cases of abuse/neglect. Do not encourage or expect child(ren) to take sides against the parent.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep. Be sure to inform the child(ren) of your role and what they can expect from you.
- Do not re-interview the child(ren) about the abuse allegations. These have already been investigated and proven. Focus on the current parent-child relationship and the changes being made. Allow the child(ren) to share details from the past if they choose.

MANDATED REPORTING

A Court Appointed Special Advocate who has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them **in** their official capacity may be abused or neglected is mandated by law to immediately report suspected abuse or neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services hotline (1-800-252-2873). Contact the CASA Executive Director as soon as possible when making a report.