



We at the Child Advocacy Board work with incredible people in Iowa who volunteer to help prevent child abuse; not only during this specially designated month, but every month. We are extremely grateful that in FY19 ICAB had hundreds of CASA Advocates and Foster Care Review Board Members serving Iowa's children in need. Our volunteers selflessly serve children and families during a very critical point in their lives. It is with great pride that we recognize their life-changing work and express our appreciation for each one of them during Child Abuse Prevention Month.

### **COVID-19 Information for CASA Programming**

At ICAB, we attended our first meeting on COVID-19 at the State agency-level on March 11th. Since that day all those activities we thought were just commonplace are put on hiatus for a time while we figure out a different way of life. One thing I've personally observed during this crisis is the care, nurture and love that has been expressed in some of the most unusual, yet heartwarming ways. Crisis always seems to bring out the best in humanity.

As you're already aware, on March 19, 2020 the Iowa CASA program made the difficult decision to suspend all in-person visits with children, families and other parties to the child's case until further direction is received. This was a particularly tough decision because as we know, those times when children are not in school or times of particularly difficult emotional and financial stress for families can put children at higher risk for abuse and neglect.



Because of this, we asked you to step up the frequency of telephone or virtual contact with your assigned children to every other week and talk with the child's caregivers and parents at least monthly. Please see the resource at the end of this article for ideas for virtual or telephonic visits. Don't forget to ask and assess if children or their families have any particular health, emotional or financial needs related to the COVID-19 crisis. If needs are identified, please pass these along to the Department of Human Services. You can also advise families to call 211 to access resources local to them if needed. And as always, don't forget to make a case note in CAMS about your visit. If you were able to have a video chat with your CASA child, please enter this as a face-to-face visit. Sure, it's a little unorthodox, but so is this crisis and we want to give you credit for the work you're doing. My personal mantra has become "Just do the best you can with what's available." That's all anyone can ask at this time.



With limited appearances for court hearings and generally restricted travel, our CASA Coordinators are using this time to catch up on program and volunteer management-related work. Expect to hear from your Coordinator in the month of April to talk about all kinds of issues such as continuing education training hours and updating case records. They're looking forward to having a dedicated time to talk with you. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out with your questions.

If you're looking for a fun way to stay engaged with CASA, check out CASA Quarantine BINGO at the end of this article.

Thank you for all you're doing to advocate for and protect Iowa's most vulnerable children, even in this most unusual time.

## Resource - Ideas for Telephonic/Virtual Visits with Children

1. **Encourage literacy.** Have your children read books to you! Even board books where a younger child can make a story that goes with the pictures!
2. **Have a coloring match off.** Use the same color crayon for one minute, then let the other side pick... Go through the whole range of colors.
3. **Get out the joke books!** Take time telling riddles and jokes to each other.
4. **Build parts of a Lego city.** Talk about building a piece of the city at the same time- one builds a barber shop and the other the post office.
5. **Share a snack.** Go through and count those gummy bears while also identifying their colors. Talk about nutrition with older kids. Design a silly veggie face and share!
6. **Challenge yourselves to play a game.** If each side has the same game, you can move your partner along too. Or try UNO and play together. What about Go Fish? There's always a way to play games in a new fashion. Pictionary and charades are always a hit as well as Headbands!

7. **Share music and have a dance off.** Can you DJ your favorite song and bust out some cool moves? Have fun and laugh while getting some exercise!
8. **Share a story writing prompt.** Each person can tag on one sentence to make a new story! Just number the turns so you can read it aloud again.
9. **Ask them to share their day but use sound effects and different voices.** Let them choose to talk like a vampire and discuss their last meal! Done well, this one's a gut buster!
10. **Try being the BEST listener.** Lean in, ask open-ended questions (like "Tell me the best part of your day" or Tell me more about that") and don't give any advice. They know when you're really listening and are excited about what they have to say.

# CASA Quarantine Bingo

VIDEO CHATTED W/ CASA KID	PARTICIPATED IN A TELEPHONIC COURT HEARING	TAKEN A NEW CASE	CHECKED AND/OR READ NEW DOCS EDMS	PARTICIPATED IN A CASA WEB TRAINING
CALLED YOUR COACH OR COORDINATOR	CELEBRATED YOUR CASA KIDS BIRTHDAY	READ A BOOK TO YOUR CASA KID	SHARED YOUR CASA EXPERIENCE WITH A FRIEND	HAD VIRTUAL COFFEE WITH CASA ADVOCATES
SHARED CASA POST ON FACEBOOK	GONE OUT IN PUBLIC WITH A MASK	<i>Free</i>	READ BOOK RELATED TO CASA	USED HAND SANITIZER
PLAYED A GAME W/ CASA KID THROUGH VIDEO CHAT	POSTED ABOUT CASA ON SOCIAL MEDIA	TALKED ABOUT CASA WITH A STRANGER	COMPLETED ALL MY TRAINING EVALUATIONS IN CAMS	ENTERED CASE NOTES INTO CAMS
TALKED TO MY COORDINATOR ON THE PHONE	EMAILED MY DHS WORKER	READ A FSRP REPORT OR CALLED MY FSRP WORKER	SENT A TEXT MESSAGE TO FOSTERS, PARENTS, OR CASA KIDS	COMPLETED MY MONTHLY UPDATE IN CAMS



The Clay-O'Brien Cluster Foster Care Review Board has been active since 1999. Pictured above left to right: Gloria Schmillen (7 years), Rebecca Goeken (18 years), Marcia Stoever (4 years), Eileen Gengler (new); Andrea Crew (12 years), and Melissa Pick (2 years).

The Board brings experience in education, social work, disability, guidance counseling, healthcare, and parenting. This Board meets monthly in Spencer to review children in foster care placements in both Clay and O'Brien Counties. There has been no shortage of cases to review by the Board. When asked about why they volunteer, here is what they said. "I volunteer to make a difference in a child's life. I advocate for the children in our communities who are in need. We are lucky to get to see some great outcomes for children." The newest Board Member, but certainly not new to the world of serving children, is Eileen. After retiring several years ago as a high school guidance counselor, Eileen could not just stay at home. She shared, "It takes a village to raise a child, and everyone in the community should help however they can." Collectively the Board agreed that, "Our job is to prevent children from ending up in bad situations or falling in the cracks."



The Cherokee-Ida Foster Care Review Boards meets bimonthly in Cherokee County.

Pictured left to right: Lori Ebel (new), Ramona Nitz (4 years), Connie Ladwig (new), and Jolene Schumacher (13 years). Not pictured: John Spengler (11 years), Jo B (new), and Deb Bush (new)

The Board has recently filled vacancies, which has been a new and exciting change. The new Board Members bring different insight and experiences which has been helpful in giving cases a new and fresh perspective. Last month long time FCRB Board Member Judy Brown retired after serving 20 years as a CASA and FCRB Board Member.

Ramona Nitz shared, "I was fascinated that legislation would allow concerned citizens to listen to testimony and make recommendations to Juvenile Court through the Foster Care Review Board system. Serving on the Board has changed my view on many different things. I see that changes need to be made in the system. The system is overburdened and there are not enough workers and funding."

Jolene Schumacher shared, "I have always had my heart in the scripture and it says to be the voice for the voiceless. I wanted to be a CASA and a Foster Care Review Board member to serve that purpose."

Lori Ebel who is a new Board Member stated, "I saw an article in the paper so I contacted another Board Member who I knew was serving. I wanted to find a way to give back to the community and to help children. I want to focus on helping children and this is a perfect way to give back. Serving on this FCRB has been eye opening. It has made me aware of the needs and issues in my very own community."

Connie Ladwig shared, "I want to serve children. I have served as a CASA and always had that desire. I have three adopted grandchildren and have seen firsthand the needs that children have. This is one small thing I can do to give back."

The Iowa Child Advocacy Board thanks both of these Boards and all of these great FCRB Members for their compassion and ongoing service to vulnerable children!

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## WELCOME TO OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Megan Allen, Black Hawk  
Shaun Broyhill, Plymouth  
Roxanne Ellis, Woodbury  
Kelly Freed, Woodbury  
Janice Hewitt, Black Hawk  
Dawn Klingfuss, Black Hawk  
Jill Lane, Jefferson  
Raymond Smith, Clinton  
Jessica Wardenburg, Polk

Aleesia Beary, Johnson  
Jo Burkhalter, Cherokee  
April Finnin-Rink, Dubuque  
Eileen Gengler, Clay  
Taylor Hopkins, Black Hawk  
Mackenzie Koehler, Dubuque  
Katie Murphy, Woodbury  
Peter Steinfeld, Buena Vista

Shelby Behymer, Mahaska  
Lisa Buss, Hardin  
Scott Fortune, Black Hawk  
Kathleen Grace, Dubuque  
Linda Hunerdosse, Jefferson  
Ethan Lake, Jefferson  
Lorrayne Rudish, Linn  
Meredith Treppa, Woodbury

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On March 13, 2020 ICAB Deputy Administrator Amy Carpenter was presented with a Leadership Development Certificate. To earn this certificate, Amy completed thirteen courses over a two year time period. These courses focused on the topics of communication, ethics, change management, and employee engagement. Congratulations on your achievement, Amy!

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## From the Bench

Q & A with Judge Stephanie Forker Parry. She is a District Associate Judge in the Third Judicial District of Iowa and was appointed to the bench in 2017. Judge Forker Parry covers Woodbury County.

**Q.** What factors do you consider when determining whether to assign a CASA to a case?

**A.** In a perfect world, we would have a CASA on all cases. I assign a CASA to as many new cases as possible based upon the number of CASAs available. I also give consideration to the request of any party to have a CASA appointed.

**Q.** What benefits do you believe CASAs provide the children in cases they are assigned?

**A.** In a system where we unfortunately have high turnover of professionals, CASAs are a consistent person to advocate for the children throughout the case. The children have a person they can trust and count on to be present for them and to advocate for them.

**Q.** What benefits do you believe the CASA program provides you and the juvenile court system?**A.** The CASA program provides much needed help and support in a system with professionals that are stretched thin with resources and the time necessary to make connections with the children in our courts. And I can't say enough how impressed I am with the level of commitment and professionalism I see from our CASA Coordinators and our CASA volunteers.

**Q.** What advice would you give someone considering volunteering as an advocate with CASA?**A.** If you have a few extra hours a month and want to make a life-long impact in the life of a child, please consider becoming a CASA. You do not need a prior understanding of the court system, training is provided.

**Q.** Do you have a memorable case in which a CASA played a part? If so, how did the CASA make a difference?

**A.** I had a contested termination of parental rights case where a young man found the courage to testify to advocate for himself and his younger siblings. It was important to him to be present and to be heard. The encouragement and support of his CASA helped him feel much more comfortable with the court process.

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## Trainer's Corner: April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

### **For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training**

The Iowa CASA Program supports and reinforces the message that advocating for



protective factors in children and families is an integral part of ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being for the children we serve.



**Everyone has a role to play in promoting the social and emotional well-being of children and families in our communities.** Protective factors are conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate risk and promote healthy development and well-being. Put simply, they are the strengths that help to buffer and support families at risk.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway 2014 Issue Brief, [Protective Factors Approaches in Child Welfare](#) outlines some of the important reasons why a protective factor approach is important. Traditionally, child maltreatment prevention and intervention strategies have focused exclusively on risk factors and their elimination. We now know that changing the balance between risk and protective factors so that protective factors outweigh risk factors is a more effective prevention and intervention strategy. Helping children and families build resilience and develop skills, characteristics, knowledge, and relationships that offset risk exposure can contribute to both short- and long-term positive outcomes. Using a protective factors approach can be a positive way to engage families because it focuses on families' strengths and what they are doing right. Focusing exclusively on risk factors with families can leave families feeling stigmatized or unfairly judged.

To learn more about the protective factors for strengthening families and youth, use the following links to explore action steps you can take within your role.

- [Parental Resilience](#)
- [Youth Resilience](#)

As first year Advocates complete the required *Trauma Informed Advocacy to Build Resiliency Training and Monitoring a Case* they delve deeper into how identifying existing protective factors as strengths and making recommendations that impact protective and promotive factors can strengthen families and promote thriving children. All Advocates and Coaches are encouraged to register for an upcoming session if they haven't already completed the trainings or would like a refresher on these concepts and how to frame advocacy efforts within this framework. Learn how you can attend one of these sessions through your Local Coordinator.



The following links are useful resources to learn more about child abuse and neglect and the protective factors:

- [Working with Families Using the Protective Factors](#)
- [Protecting Children: Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect](#)



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