



Advocating for the protection of Iowa's children and improvement of the child welfare system.



September is Kinship Care Month. "Kinship care is the full time nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents or any adult who has a kinship bond with the child." A Natural Bridge. CWLA

We want to extend a huge THANK YOU to all of the kinship caregivers out there - grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and even family friends - who are stepping up for children!

And we want to say THANK YOU to all our ICAB volunteers who care and who dedicate their time to focus on the needs of children involved in the child welfare system.

The Value of What We Do

The pandemic rages on. Emotions are frayed. The families we serve have complex, seemingly impossible issues. Support that was once easy to find, now feels scarcely available. Perhaps all of this is compounded by the search to find the value of what we do as child advocates and why we continue to pursue this worthy cause.



Many of the changes made by the Department of Human Services during implementation of Family First legislation in Iowa have been hugely positive for families. Keeping children with their families while providing intensive home-based services means fewer children come before the court. Ultimately, that's a good thing. Anyone who works in social services will tell you their dream, their vision, is to help people so effectively they work themselves out of a job.

However, enacting the specifics of Family First in our state has created some deeply challenging conditions for CASA and FCRB volunteers. In the past year, the cases that do come before the court have been hard. The issues families are dealing with are tough. And while this is nothing new, many families have already been receiving services for months before the family becomes involved in court or their children are placed in care. Reasonable efforts are provided, but too often, permanency still means Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption.

Regardless of the family or their circumstances, severing the parental relationship takes an emotional toll on everyone involved, including a child's CASA volunteer or their local Foster Care Review Board.

On behalf of the Iowa Child Advocacy Board, we simply want to say thank you for sticking with us. Thank you for staying with that child and family. The work you do is always important, but notably so at this moment when the work is especially hard. Please know that whether you're feeling upbeat about the impact you're making on a case or you're questioning if your efforts are worth the potential grief, you're ALWAYS valued and fiercely needed.



Welcome to Our New Volunteers!

Sheryl Bowen, CASA, Mills County
Colyn Burbank, CASA, Polk County
Ashley Cullen, CASA, Madison County
Meagan Jameson, CASA, Muscatine Co.
Hannah Poolman, CASA, Johnson County
Cassandra Saylor Pluim, CASA, Muscatine Co.
Hunter Stange, CASA, Pottawattamie Co.

Zenna Boyd, CASA, Wapello County
Hilary Burbank, CASA, Polk County
Morgan Gullely, CASA, Johnson County
Catherine Lucas, CASA, Polk County
Hannah Rodriguez, CASA, Polk County
Jamie Stander, CASA, Benton County
Sara Troge, CASA, Pottawattamie Co.

Volunteer Spotlight: Toby Mitchell, FCRB

The Wapello County Foster Care Review Board began serving Wapello County 21 years ago. One of the founding members, Toby Mitchell participated in her last review (for now) in July. "Toby has a knack for dealing with people. She was able to find something good in all of the bad. She had a great way of starting the meeting off in a positive manner. Others can do this and do it well but not like Toby could." Linda Yates, Wapello Co FCRB Facilitator shared. Toby has been dedicated to the FCRB since the beginning, she welcomes new members and helped them become acclimated to the board. "Toby is amazing in her way of asking questions and engaging the child and foster parent." A Potential new FCRB member shared during a new review. Toby has not only shared a passion for the Wapello Co FCRB but for the Foster Care Review Board in general, she has been willing to cover boards that were short a member, and most recently joined the Mahaska Co Board to assist. Toby will be greatly missed as a member but we will be looking forward to seeing her across the table in her new roll.

Trainer's Corner

For FCRB Members & CASA Advocates: September is Baby Safety Month.



Parents and caregivers have many responsibilities but keeping baby safe and healthy is a number one priority! While CASA and FCRB volunteers advocate for and make recommendations on cases with infants, it's important to be aware of current safety practices.

Founded by the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) in 1983, Baby Safety Month (BSM) occurs every September and offers a great chance for everyone to brush up on baby-proof safety standards, practices and tips. Babies aren't the only ones going through a huge learning curve in life – the rest of us often need to brush up on our skills in order to ensure no accidents occur and spaces can be kept safe for babies to grown, learn and play. As volunteers, we gather observations and make important recommendations, so we need to be aware of the safety facts that may have changed over the years

Sample guidelines for making solid observations:

- Bulky, fluffy winter coats and snowsuits should not be worn underneath the harness of a car seat. Observing a parent holding an infant in the Iowa cold without a big thick winter coat, perhaps the gold standard for parents in the past, is not necessarily a sign of neglect. If the parent has an alternate way to keep the baby warm while transferring from the warm indoors to the car seat, then they are keeping the baby safe as a passenger while also staying protected from the Iowa elements.
- Is the baby sleeping on their back? Days of side sleeping with a blanket tucked behind the baby to keep them from rolling onto their back are gone. Back is best for all sleeping. Is the caretaker making sure to place the baby on a firm mattress free from stuffed animals and blankets?
- Caretakers NEVER leave the baby unattended during bath time. If the caretaker must leave the bathroom, do they take the baby with them? Caretakers do not rely on older children to watch the baby in the water, even if it's for what seems to be a few minutes.
- Car seats expire! Is that new information for you as an advocate or board member? Have the parents checked the labels and instructions for the specific model's useful life? Parents knowing that expiration date is a great factual observation demonstrating that they are engaging in another protective factor for keeping their little one safe.
- Are the children taken out of the car in the summer, even for short errands? The body temperature of a child increases 3 to 5 times faster than that of an adult. Even with an exterior temperature of as little as 60°, the

internal temperature of most passenger vehicles can still reach 110°.

- Is the floor free from small toys and objects? 77% of children that die from choking on foreign objects are under the age of 1 year.



For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training Credit

Advocates and Coaches complete 12 hours of in-service credit annually to enhance their case specific advocacy efforts. To explore the available trainings your local Coordinator can provide to you, see [CASA In-Services](#) for the full list of available trainings.

2021 VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 6
YOU'RE INVITED!

Time: 8:30- 4:30
Place: Holiday Inn
Hotel & Suites
4800 Merle Hay Rd
Urbandale, IA 50322

REFLECT ON THE PAST
FOCUS ON THE PRESENT
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

[ICAB Volunteers - Click Here to Register](#)

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<p>Website: childadvocacy.iowa.gov Email: cab@dia.iowa.gov</p>		

