

What is Plenary Guardianship?

In Illinois, a non-parent caregiver may seek court ordered plenary guardianship of a minor child if their parents are unable or unwilling to care for the child. Plenary guardianship is put in place to ensure that the child has a safe, stable home with an adult who is authorized to make decisions on their behalf and provide for their needs.

Plenary guardianship of a child grants a non-parent caregiver:

-  Physical custody and corresponding parental responsibilities;
-  authority to consent to medical treatment and make medical decisions
-  authority to register for school and make educational decisions,
-  authority to obtain copies of birth certificate and other records and documents,
-  authority to make day-to-day decisions, and
-  discretion with respect to parenting time.

 Plenary guardianship is not “temporary” or “short-term”. Plenary guardianship requires court approval prior to returning care and custody of a child to a parent.

Do You Need an Interpreter?

If you need the assistance of an interpreter, please tell the judge or the clerk. The Court will provide an interpreter at your next court date.

Do You Need Legal Assistance?

If you have legal questions, it may be appropriate for you to consult with a private attorney or seek legal aid for personalized advice.

DuPage Legal Aid (630) 653-6212 https://www.dupagelegalaid.org/who-we-are.html	Prairie State Legal Services (630) 690-2130 https://pslegal.org/
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Have Questions?

It’s okay to have questions. If you’re unsure about the guardianship process or the role of a CASA volunteer, you are encouraged to ask for clarification.

If you have a question or concern about a CASA assigned to the child’s case, please call using the number below.

Please note that CASA does not provide legal advice. For questions regarding your legal rights or the specifics of your case, you are encouraged to consult with an attorney or speak with your caseworker.

Questions for CASA?

Jamie Matalka

Guardianship Advocate Supervisor

 **630.470.5826**

 **jamie@dupagecasa.org**

CASA Main Office

 **630.221.0889**
Monday – Friday | 9 AM – 4 PM

 **info@dupagecasa.org**

 **www.dupagecasa.org**

 **CASA OF DUPAGE COUNTY**
505 N. COUNTY FARM RD., #3C
WHEATON, IL 60187



Understanding CASA’s Role in Minor Guardianship Cases



A Message for Families

The judge has appointed CASA in your minor guardianship case. You may meet CASA in the courtroom on your first court date, or CASA will contact you at the phone number listed on your petition or motion.

CASA is the “eyes and ears” of the Court. CASA’s role is to provide unbiased information to the judge to assist them in making decisions that are in the best interest of the child subject to the proposed or existing guardianship. CASA does not make recommendations to the Court. All final decisions are made by the judge.

CASA will interview you and visit your home. You are encouraged to be open with CASA about anything important in the child’s life. CASA’s role is to understand the child’s needs and your perspective is important.

We hope the process does not feel overwhelming. It is designed to ensure that the child has a stable home, consistent care and other support.

— *CASA of DuPage County*



What are My Rights as a Parent?

Guardianship does not terminate parental rights.

As a parent:

- You have the right to be notified when a petition for guardianship of your child(ren) has been filed.
- You may consent to guardianship, or you have the right to object to the guardianship. The judge will decide if there is a legal basis for granting the guardianship.
- You have the right to ask for reasonable parenting time with your child, if appropriate.
- You retain the authority to ask the Court to return custody of your child and terminate the guardianship. You must be able to demonstrate a material change in your circumstances since the time the guardianship was put in place.

What is CASA?

CASA is a nonprofit organization that recruits, trains, and supports volunteer advocates. Supported by professional staff, volunteer advocates gather and report information to judges who make decisions on behalf of children in DuPage County's Juvenile and Probate courtrooms. While CASA works alongside DCFS and the Court, CASA is an independent organization.

Initially, you will meet and/or speak to the CASA Probate Supervisor, and then a CASA volunteer advocate will be assigned to your case. The CASA advocate will be your main CASA contact, but you may always reach out to the Probate Supervisor at (630) 470-5826.

How is CASA Involved in Minor Guardianship Cases?

CASA will gather information about the circumstances of the proposed or existing guardianship.

CASA’s duties include:

- ✓ Visiting the home where the child lives.
- ✓ Speaking to and observing the child.
- ✓ Interviewing the proposed guardian, parents and other people involved in the child’s life.
- ✓ Asking for relevant documents, records and collateral information.
- ✓ Obtaining authorizations for DCFS background checks.
- ✓ Submitting an unbiased report to the Court.
- ✓ Attending court hearings.

CASA Does Not:

- ✗ Charge fees.
- ✗ Give legal advice.
- ✗ Investigate allegations of abuse or neglect.
- ✗ Provide medical or clinical advice.
- ✗ Take action in urgent or emergency situations.
- ✗ File court documents on behalf of parties.
- ✗ Transport children or family members.
- ✗ Supervise family visits.
- ✗ Make recommendations or any decisions related to the guardianship.

CASA may help families understand the process and connect them with information about available community resources, when appropriate.

All final decisions are made by the judge.