The volunteer shall adhere to the following guidelines with respect to maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of others in all matters relating to an assigned case. The guidelines are set out below. They govern circumstances in which the CASA requests or receives information. However, these guidelines cannot cover every possible situation that may arise. Any questions and/or concerns the CASA volunteer has regarding confidentiality or the application of this policy should be discussed with the CASA Staff. These will be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

- Cases involving parties who are known to the CASA program as being HIV positive, having AIDS and/or having other Sexually Transmitted Disease (STDs) are governed by additional confidentiality protocol to which the volunteer must adhere. If, after accepting a case, the CASA learns it involves a STD, the CASA should immediately contact the CASA Volunteer Supervisor to obtain protocol.

- In requesting information in the course of an investigation, a CASA may need to obtain information from doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, attorneys, clergy, teachers, or other professionals who have a protected relationship status with a party or the child. Your Appointment Order should cover most cases. By statute, there are limitations on the disclosure of information a professional receives during the course of his/her relationship with a client or patient. Many professionals also have ethical principles that govern their ability to disclose information (for example, attorneys are bound by Rules of Professional Conduct; doctors, psychologist, and social workers also have ethical codes). The professional has no authority to provide any information to a CASA without the express permission of the client or court order.

If it is necessary to obtain any privileged/confidential information about someone who is directly related to the case but is not the child(ren), the CASA must obtain from that person a written release of information which allows the professional, hospital or treatment center to discuss the matter with CASA.

While a person may sign a release allowing the CASA to obtain confidential information, he/she may not want to authorize disclosure to the other parties to the case and/or their attorneys. The CASA should review the signed release form very carefully and seek guidance from the CASA Volunteer Supervisor if the CASA has any questions at all.

Steps to take prior to meeting with the above mentioned professionals:
1. Call organization to let them know you are faxing your court order that appoints you as the CASA to the case to set up a meeting;
2. Fax court order;
3. Call organization to make sure they received the court order; and
4. Schedule needed appointments in a timely manner.

- The CASA is not allowed to disseminate documents to any of the parties, their attorney’s and/or collateral sources, which are covered by state and/or federal confidentiality laws. These documents may include drug and alcohol evaluations/ records; involuntary mental health treatment and rape crisis center information; and some criminal histories. Those covered by federal law usually are stamped, “This information is protected by the Federal law and prohibits you from making any further disclosure. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is NOT sufficient for this purpose.”

- The CASA shall never discuss an assigned case for purely conversational purposes, particularly in specific terms, with anyone. The CASA understands that as a volunteer for CASA of Douglas County, they will be subject to the same rules of confidentiality that apply
to permanent staff members. The CASA agrees to act in a responsible and professional manner when providing services to CASA of Douglas County and agree to adhere to the CASA of Douglas County Volunteer Policies and Guidelines, which apply to all CASA of Douglas County volunteers and staff.

- The CASA agrees to act in a responsible and professional manner when providing services to CASA of Douglas County and agree to adhere to the CASA of Douglas County Volunteer Policies and Guidelines, which apply to all CASA of Douglas County volunteers and staff.

- The CASA will receive neither remuneration nor compensation for service performed as a volunteer; that working as a volunteer carries no promise of future employment.

- The CASA will be expected to become thoroughly familiar with the agency’s policies and procedures, both written and verbal, set forth for volunteers. The CASA agrees to be prompt and reliable in reporting for scheduled appointments and to provide the Program Director, Program Supervisor or Peer Coordinator with an accurate record of hours worked. They agree to attend orientation and training sessions, and, if possible, agree to attend monthly volunteer meetings (Snack –N– Yaks).

- The CASA should not promise a child or any party to the assigned case that his/her statements will be kept secret or confidential.

- The CASA will not disclose the identity or description of child(ren) or youths not assigned to the CASA but seen at a foster home or other juvenile facility where the CASA visits.

- The CASA must disclose confidential information learned during the course of an investigation in these circumstances:
  1. When consulting with the Executive Director, Program Director, their CASA Program Supervisor or their Peer Coordinator who must be provided all significant case specifics known to the CASA,
  2. When ordered by the judge in a hearing or trial; and
  3. When the CASA thinks there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse.

- A CASA may disclose confidential information and discuss case specifics in two circumstances:
  1. When the CASA consults with a professional service provider (medical personnel, mental health specialist, social worker, etc) who is providing services to the child(ren) who has agreed to the professional’s disclosure or because their client signed a Release-of-Information Form.
  2. When the petitioner and respondent agree or when the court orders the disclosure.

The CASA may disclose a case in hypothetical terms for the purpose of illustration at professional meetings (seminars) designed to address issues promoting the best interests of children. The CASA shall not, however, mention the names of any individuals involved in the case or provide facts that may identify the case or parties.
In light of the foregoing, the undersigned, by his or her signature below, promises and agrees that any and all case-related information disclosed to a CASA or a trainee during any part of the training experience will remain confidential and will never be disclosed by the CASA, trainee or to anyone outside the CASA program. This agreement shall remain in force whether or not the undersigned becomes a CASA in the Program.

__________________________________________  ____________________
Advocate Signature                               Date

__________________________________________
Advocate Name (please print)

C: My Documents/Volunteer Application/Confidentiality Policy