

THE COURT REPORT



Your Work Product

The CASA Report is arguably the most important part of your advocacy! Judges and attorneys rely on your reports to develop a more detailed understanding of the child and family. It is the only vehicle through which you present the information you have gathered about a child's situation and your recommendations about what services will meet the child's needs. Reports should thoroughly reflect the information you gathered during visits, conversations, and records reviewed.

Timeliness of your reports is paramount! It is very important to work with your Volunteer Coordinator to ensure you meet all deadlines regarding your report. This ensures:

- The judges have time to read and digest the information.
- The attorneys have time to discuss information with their clients.
- The child receives a voice in their own court proceedings.

Virginia Code § 16.1 - 274

The Code of Virginia outlines the timing that is required for filing reports. The Code states:

"Whenever any court directs an investigation... the probation officer, court-appointed special advocate, or other agency conducting such investigation shall file such report with the clerk of the court directing the investigation... The clerk shall furnish a copy of such report to all attorneys representing parties in the matter before the court no later than seventy-two hours, and in cases of child custody, 15 days, prior to the time set by the court for hearing the matter..."

As the clerk's office must furnish copies of the reports two weeks in advance, your Volunteer Coordinator needs to have your reports three weeks prior to the hearing. This ensures plenty of time to complete the editing process, clarify any information, complete a final review, and submit it in the timely manner as required by law.

Do Not Disseminate Your Report

Please remember that it is the clerk's role to disseminate CASA reports to the attorneys. You may not email or send your reports to any attorneys or professionals. This is not to be difficult - we are following the code and the rules set by the Court.



Be sure to clarify with your Volunteer Coordinator when your CASA Report is due to start the editing process - and mark your calendar!