



ADVOCATING FOR JACKSON COUNTY'S CHILDREN

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Jackson County and the children we serve have been fortunate to be supported by **The Gordon Elwood Foundation**. Through The Gordon Elwood Foundation's belief in CASA's mission to advocate for the best interests of abused children, we have been able to more effectively advocate for children from 0-5 years old. Although CASA serves children 0-18+ who have been abused and/or neglected, it is the youngest victims of child abuse that we have been able to respond to through advocating for early assessments.

The CASA is often the first person to visit the child after removal and while in foster placement. This positions the CASA to potentially detect developmental disabilities and advocate for the appropriate referral for assessment and treatment. Our project with **The Gordon Elwood Foundation** and **The Carpenter Foundation** provided training for more than 150 CASA volunteers to learn the dynamics of the "ages and stages" tool which helps the CASA recognize if their assigned children are experiencing developmental delays. The CASA then brings this to the attention of child welfare and the courts so that professional assessments can be made. When young children with developmental delays can receive services early and consistently, their chances for success are far greater. Because the CASA is the only consistent person in the child's life during the duration of their case they also ensure that services remain consistent.



211 children ages 0 to 5 were appointed to CASAs over the last two years, and 78 of those children were found to have developmental disabilities as a result of their CASA's knowledge and training around early intervention. It is our hope to recruit and train more than 100 additional CASAs in order to meet our growing waiting list (more than 450) of children of all ages.

If you're reading this and wondering if you could be a CASA, please call us at 734-2272 or go to our website at www.jacksoncountycasa.org.

Jennifer Mylenek
Executive Director