

WORKING WITH THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Emily von Jentzen ED 4/15/15

Helping the attorney:

*Get your reports in on time. It isn't just the judge who needs to read it. The County Attorney also gets it and needs to be able to prepare appropriately.

*Good items for your report

- Hours spent by the CASA on this case.
- Number of contacts with the child; contacts with others related to this case; names of people interviewed.
- Brief History of the case.
- A list of the child's placements and the time of each placement.
- Summary of visits with the child
- Protection needs of the child
- Wishes of the child
- Conclusions: the Advocate's opinions and concerns; the advocate's recommendations.

*Bring up issues that are important to the child but that may not be picked up by other professionals – "The kid really, really wants his bicycle."

DON'T: transport or babysit a child and don't supervise parent-child visits.

Not helping the attorney

*Less than thorough investigations. Don't report as "fact" information that is uncorroborated or from unreliable sources.

*Stepping out of the Advocate role. This is the most common cause of problems for Advocates. Advocates must mind their own professional boundaries and let each professional in the case be responsible for their own territory.

*Relying on another party's position or just parroting another party.

*Getting too close to a parent (enmeshment).

*Reports submitted late or drastic change of position at the last minute.

*Not spending adequate time with the child.