Greetings:

We wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your new role and introduce you to CASA. We are grateful for the support CASA has received from the General Assembly and appreciate our legislators’ keen understanding of, and longstanding commitment to, the needs of children in the child welfare system that live in our local communities.

CASA volunteers are everyday citizens who provide direct advocacy for children in foster care and play a vital role within the child welfare system by ensuring the child’s best interests remain at the forefront of the court’s attention.  They provide consistency and continuity for a child who has experienced abuse or neglect and help to connect information among DFCS staff, foster placements, providers, schools, and many other stakeholders.  The CASA program helps to maximize community resources and increases public engagement by involving citizen volunteers in supporting juvenile courts and children in foster care, resulting in additional resources; increased public transparency and accountability; and connections for children, families, and services. Every child in foster care needs the individualized attention and sense of urgency that a CASA volunteer brings to the courtroom and in the community in promoting a child’s safety, permanency, and well-being. Last year, over 9,000 children in 156 counties had a CASA volunteer, and we are striving to ensure every child who needs a CASA has one to improve their experience in foster care and strengthen their life-long connections to family.

We recognize that the session is short and that there are many competing priorities; however, as constituents and advocates, we wish to stress the needs of the child welfare system and describe how CASA advocacy is essential to children in foster care in our community and hope you will consider meeting with us during **CASA Day at the Capitol** on **Thursday, February 2nd at the Depot.**

Thank you for your support of CASA and children in foster care in our communities.