



LEARN MORE



Post-Conference Activity

CRB and CASA volunteers, join us for a post-conference activity where you navigate the first several months of a hypothetical case.

1

Complete the activity on the following pages. All instructions are included.

2

Attend the post-conference forum on Friday, October 24, 12-1pm PST, at <https://oregonjudicial.webex.com/meet/Elliott.CRB> for discussion and Q&A with CASA and CRB volunteers and staff.



Write down your answers and reflections as you complete the exercise on the following pages. Depending on where you live, the activity could be more or less challenging. Please do not spend more than an hour or two on this activity. (If you cannot complete some of the steps, that is good information for discussion as well!)

Have your responses handy when you attend the post-conference forum on October 24. The forum will be an online guided discussion and Q&A, open to CRB and CASA volunteers. CASA and CRB staff will guide volunteers in joint and separate discussions, as well as answering the many questions this activity is likely to generate.

**This hypothetical case is not intended to be an ideal case. Characters and circumstances are imperfect for educational purposes. Any similarity to real persons or cases is purely coincidental.*



Getting There

For this activity, imagine that you are a parent whose child was recently placed into foster care. Your child is in foster care because your partner used and sold drugs in your home in your daughter's presence, and you were found to have failed to protect her from an unsafe environment and to have an alcohol addiction that impacts your ability to safely parent.

You lost your drivers' license a few months ago due to a DUI charge, and are not eligible to receive your license back for another year. You take the bus to work Monday through Thursday, where you work from noon to 9pm at a gas station.

You were court ordered to attend AA meetings at least four times per week and to find a sponsor. You were also court ordered to take a substance abuse evaluation and enroll in an approved parenting course. Your partner is in jail awaiting trial related to their drug sales.

Without their half of the rent, you cannot miss any shifts or you will lose your housing. Maintaining a calm, homelike setting is part of the Conditions for Return to get your daughter back. Your caseworker scheduled you for a two-hour substance abuse evaluation at your county's behavioral health office on Thursday next week at 1pm and provided you with a free bus pass for the month. The caseworker also gave you a list of approved parenting classes, and all of them occur when you scheduled to be at work.

Look up any gas station located in/near your town. That gas station is now your workplace for this activity, and your real home address is also your home for this activity. Look up your local bus schedules and have those timetables handy. Now, using that information:

1. Think about how to get to your 1pm Thursday appointment at your county's behavioral health office by bus or walking. What local public transportation will get you there on time? If none, how will you address that problem?

2. You must miss work on Thursday to attend the behavioral health intake appointment. Think about how you will make up the lost income, and explain your absence to your boss. What is your plan?

Your visits with your daughter are on Mondays from 9:30-11:30am at the ODHS Child Welfare office in your town, because that timeslot works best for the resource parents and does not conflict with your work schedule. Your visits are monitored (not fully supervised) so you would like to spend time with your child at the playground near where you work. That way, you would not have to leave visits early to get to work on time, and it would be a lot more fun for your daughter than the office. But, the caseworker says there is not enough staff to monitor visits away from the office, so you are required to attend visits there.

Figure out how to get from your home to the local Child Welfare office, and from the Child Welfare office to your workplace, on time for your visits and your shift at work.

Will it work?

If so, what is your plan? If not, what do you choose to do next?

You need to get to four AA meetings per week to comply with court orders. You cannot afford to miss another day at work after you took an unpaid day off to attend your substance use assessment. You also do not want to leave visits early. Your daughter is everything to you and the week seems to stretch on forever between times that you see her. And, last time you were at court you saw the judge chastising a parent who had a habit of leaving his visits early.

Look up the locations and times of AA meetings in your community by searching for "AA meetings near me" on a search engine. Using that information and your bus schedule, figure out how to get to at least four meetings per week given your work and visitation schedule. Remember, you were court-ordered to attend scheduled visits and AA meetings, but you also need to keep your job in order to continue to afford housing for your daughter to return to.

What is your plan?

The parenting classes recommended by your caseworker take place on weekday evenings, during your work shifts. You have called your caseworker about the scheduling problem, missed their return call, and then called them again. You have not yet received a response and because of how busy things are, you forgot to follow up with her.

You have court this morning for a limited review hearing. As you are sitting in the back of the courtroom waiting to be called up, the judge goes through several cases of other families whose children are in foster care. The father in the case before yours is told by the judge that he is "making excuses" for his lack of attendance at substance abuse treatment.

Next, the judge calls your case.

After you get up to the front of the courtroom with a new attorney you just met a few minutes ago, a person called a "CASA" tells the courtroom about your child and how they are doing handling the trauma they've been through. You have never met this person. The judge thanks them, and asks you if you have started a parenting class yet.

CRB volunteers:

You know your new attorney does not yet understand your circumstances. But your attorney and the judge both know that it has been three months since you were court ordered to take a parenting class and that your caseworker already gave you a list of approved classes in your Action Agreement, which you agreed to and signed.

Your brand new attorney looks at you, unable to answer for you because they do not know whether you have started a parenting class.
What do you do or say?

CASA volunteers:

You feel defensive and worried after the court hearing. You are the parent and should have a say in what this CASA person knows and says about your family. Your caseworker never mentioned anything about a person that only visits with your child and not you. Now you feel like it is just one more thing you have to figure out.

You remember someone left you a message awhile back to talk about their role and your child, but you were too busy and overwhelmed to call back at the time. You need to make sure you are protecting your and your child's needs, but you no longer have that phone number. Maybe that was the CASA. What do you do?

CRB volunteers, continue here. CASAs, move on to the next page.

You are at your first 6-month CRB review. Since your last court hearing, you were fired from the gas station after you missed too many shifts at work to attend visits, court, and classes. Because you were unable to pay rent, you lost your apartment. You are now homeless, and you are attending the CRB review by phone using a free phone your caseworker gave you.

During the opening statement at the CRB review, the lead reviewer reminds parties that in order to avoid cross-talk, everyone should stay on mute until they are asked a question. After all you have been through in the last 6 months, you are scared to speak up except to answer specific questions the board asks you. Your attorney is not at the review with you today because they were double-booked and had to be in trial in another case.

1. What kinds of questions do you hope the CRB board members ask you at this review?
2. What do you hope the board members ask ODHS about?
3. What do you hope the CRB recommends for the Court or ODHS to do next?

(End of activity for CRB volunteers. Thanks for participating!)

CASAs:

Now, change to the point of view of the CASA in this case. You get a phone call with from the caseworker about 6 months after the child was placed in care. You learn that the mother of the child you are advocating for has recently become homeless. You ask what resources are being provided to her. The caseworker states, “We’ve offered everything we can and the parents are not using what’s being provided.” You want to ask for more details about specific resources to determine if other barriers are causing the parent difficulty accessing the offered resources, but you are worried about being perceived as “pushy.”

What strategies can you employ to better understand the situation and get the most up-to-date information regarding the case?

You made a call to the school counselor who recently saw the child you are advocating for in this case. The counselor shared that the child had an outburst at school that seemed unprovoked, and they could not understand why the child would have had this issue. No other serious behavioral issues have appeared since then, but there are smaller everyday struggles in the classroom that appear to be getting in the way of the child’s success at school. You learn that the counselor and principal did not have anything on file indicating that the child had entered foster care.

How do you follow up on this information?
What is your communication plan?

After the first few months of the case, you were successful in making contact with the child’s non-incarcerated parent. The parent was guarded, defensive, and maybe a bit confused or overwhelmed initially. But, they warmed up to you after you spoke up at a CRB review to recommend more visitation time in a setting more natural than the ODHS office.

You see the parent in the hallway at the courthouse today before the first permanency hearing. The child runs up to them and they hug. The parent starts crying, and that gets the child crying as well. You understand the parent has lost their job, is now homeless, lacks a means of transportation, and is struggling to stay engaged in services. It seems like the only parental progress in this case from your perspective has been backwards. The child is in a safe resource placement, stabilizing in school, and finally in therapy. You are planning to request a change of plan to guardianship or adoption based on the lack of progress towards reunification.

The caseworker and parent’s attorney are standing next to you talking about the UAs that the attorney had ordered for the parent starting a few weeks ago. All UAs have been negative for substances including alcohol, which is news to you. The attorney asks about parent-child sober living options. As you are listening to this conversation, the parent’s new partner walks up to the parent and child who are still hugging, and hugs them both.

After observing these interactions and conversation, how would you proceed in your advocacy at the hearing? What about after?