



CHILD ADVOCATES OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA, INC.

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REPORT TO THE COURT

JUDGE _____

(Insert Name of Judge Above)

*This report is of a confidential nature for the benefit of the Court
and may be distributed only to parties of the proceedings.*

CASA Volunteer: *(Insert Volunteer's Name)*
Date of Appointment: *(This date can be found on the last page of your order of appointment.)*

Names of Children: *(List each child's full name and date of birth – find on petition.)* **DOB:** **JD #** *(This number can be found at the top of the petition.)*

Date of Report: *(Day report submitted.)* **Date of Next Hearing:** *(Day court is scheduled.)*
Type of Hearing: *(Review, disposition, termination, etc.)* **Amount of Time in Custody:** *(Calculate the # of days/months in custody.)*

Persons Interviewed: **Relationship to Children:**
List only the people you spoke to or interviewed since your last report and their relationship to the children, such as:

Clint Thomas *Natural Father*
Mrs. Tina McGillicuddy *Jake's First Grade Teacher*

_____ ARE CHILDREN TO WHOM THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT DOES/DOES NOT APPLY.

(List names of the children above and select "does" if the ICWA applies or "does not" apply if the children are not Native American. For example: "JAKE THOMAS IS A CHILD TO WHOM THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT DOES APPLY.")

Background Information: *Type in a brief summary of the case from the facts in the petition. Use the most recent petition, which could be an Amended Petition or a Second Amended Petition. You will use this same information in all of your reports. For example: "On or about 2/23/16, Claremore Police Department Drug Task Force members arrested Clint Thomas and Cindy Thomas, natural parents of Jake Thomas, for manufacturing methamphetamines using the shake and bake method in the kitchen of their home at the corner*

of Blue Starr and Willow Drive. At the time of the drug bust, officers discovered a 6-year-old minor child, later identified as Jake Thomas. Police stated that the minor child's eyes were watering from the chemical compounds in the air. A hair follicle test showed that the minor child tested positive for meth. OKDHS aided in the joint response and took the minor child into custody before the parents were arrested."

ISSUES FOR THE COURT'S ATTENTION

Involved Party Contact:

This section is for interviews/information with subjects other than the child, for instance:

"CLINT THOMAS: CASA met with Mr. Thomas at the Rogers County Jail. Mr. Thomas has a long-standing addiction problem. He states that his drug of choice is meth, but when he cannot obtain the precursor materials to manufacture meth, he smokes K2 and marijuana. Mr. Thomas told CASA he knows he needs help, but he can't see any way to get help while he's in jail. Mr. Thomas admitted to using illegal substances since the age of 17. Mr. Thomas was visibly shaking and his eyes were darting everywhere during CASA's interview with him. Mr. Thomas was very concerned about who CASA was and why CASA was at the jail to interview him. Mr. Thomas stated he was concerned that the FBI has been conducting surveillance on his property and is trying to have him arrested. He expects that they will extradite him any day now.

TINA MCGILLICUDDY: Mrs. McGillicuddy is Jake's first grade teacher. Mrs. McGillicuddy told CASA that Jake's attendance throughout the first part of the school year was very sporadic. Jake is far behind the other children in his class and requires a great deal of Mrs. McGillicuddy's time. The foster parents have been working with Jake on recognizing letters and practicing sight words and basic math skills. Jake is just now beginning to read pre-K level books. He is on an IEP for ADHD issues.

OSCN.NET AND ODCR.COM: CASA reviewed both OSCN and ODCR for criminal records and found that both Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Thomas have extensive criminal histories. Mr. Thomas is involved in CM-2015-34 in Mayes County for Possession of Pre-Cursor Materials and CF-2014-255 in Tulsa County for Possession of Stolen Vehicle (APFC). Mrs. Thomas is involved in CM-2015-35 in Mayes County for Possession of Pre-Cursor Materials and CM-2014-233 in Tulsa County for Public Intoxication. A complete list of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas's criminal history is appended to this report."

NOTE: *Four web sources you should check frequently include: www.oscn.net (Oklahoma Supreme Court Network); www.odcr.com (Oklahoma District Court Records); Facebook; and Instagram. If you need to, create a family tree so that you can keep all of the family members straight. See www.myfamily.com for family tree printables.*

STATUS OF THE CHILDREN:

This section is for information about the children. In each section, devote at least one paragraph to each child on your caseload. Some questions to ask yourself when writing your report are listed in each section.

Placement: *Answer the question "Where is the child currently placed?" For example:*

"Jake is placed in a traditional foster home in Claremore."

Typically, CASA does not reveal the location or whereabouts of the children, unless the location of the child is with a kinship placement and is known to the parents. It's best to err on the side of caution and just refer to the foster parents as "foster mother" or "foster father." If the child is Indian, be sure to say whether the placement

is or is not ICWA-compliant, meaning that the home is compliant with the Indian Child Welfare Act placement preferences.

Educational Needs: Answer the questions:

- Is the child school-aged or not school-aged?
- Is the child in school somewhere? If so, where and what grade?
- What are the child's grades currently? You may attach a grade report if you wish.
- Is the child absent often or tardy often? Collect their attendance records if there is a problem related to attendance.
- How is the child's behavior at school?
- Is he or she on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?
- If so, is the child in a regular classroom or in a class for children with special needs?
- What modifications are being offered to the child through the IEP?
- Is the child learning or does he or she appear to be having difficulty learning?
- Does the child have friends at school?
- Is the child experiencing difficulty developing friendships?
- Is the child being bullied?
- Is the child a bully?
- Is the child completely safe at school?

Be sure to speak to the child's main teacher, his or her paraprofessional, his or her school guidance counselor, and the principal.

For example, you might write:

"According to Jake's teacher, his attendance in school this year was sporadic from August to December. Jake did not return to school after Christmas Break. The principal attempted to contact Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, but the phone number listed in Jake's file was a non-working number. Jake is far behind the other children in his class. His teacher states that she spends an "inordinate" amount of time working with him in the class. She states that the foster parents are very supportive of Jake and work with him at home on recognizing and writing his alphabet, practicing sight words and getting him caught up on his math skills. Jake is just now beginning to read pre-K level books, according to Mrs. McGillicuddy, his teacher. Jake is on an IEP for ADHD issues. Please see Jake's grades and attendance record (attached). Jake has one C and one D."

Psychological/Mental Health/Social Needs: Answer the questions:

- How is this child functioning in the foster home?
- What concerning behaviors do you notice, if any?
- Does the child appear to be developmentally on-track or developmentally behind or ahead? Also, does the child do well in certain areas and not in others and describe those discrepancies?
- Does the child need counseling or therapy to address any issues?
- What are the foster parents telling you about this child's eating habits? Sleep habits? Personal hygiene? Anger issues? Questions about his or her family? Concerning behaviors or issues with the child in the foster home?
- What is the child's general affect when you visit?
- Does the child appear to be suffering with an undiagnosed mental health issue?
- What is the child telling you about his or her home? His or her parents?
- How is the child getting along with other children in the home?
- Does the child have chores?
- Does the child have friends?
- Does the child enjoy playing by himself or with others?

- *What is the child's preferred form of play?*
- *Is this child in any extracurricular activities, and if so, what?*
- *Does the child attend church?*
- *Is this home willing to keep the child long-term if the child cannot be reunified with his or her parents?*
- *If not, who is willing to adopt or be the guardian for this child?*
- *Has a diligent search been conducted for appropriate family?*
- *Is the child completely safe in this placement?*

Be sure to speak to the child's foster parents together and/or individually. Speak to relatives, grandparents, and other family members who can help you understand the child's needs.

For example, you might write:

"The foster parents report that Jake has a difficult time transitioning from one activity to another. He gets very upset if he is playing with his X-Box and has to stop playing to eat supper or take a bath. The foster parents state that Jake often spent entire days playing with his X-Box and does not understand why he cannot continue this behavior in the foster home. The foster parents allow him one hour of X-Box time after homework on school nights and two hours on weekend days. The foster parents set a timer and when it goes off, they ask Jake to turn off the X-Box. If he ignores the foster parents, they will turn off the gaming system. He is not responding well to limitations set by the foster parents. Recently, he kicked a hole into his bedroom wall because he was angry that the foster parents turned off the X-Box when the timer went off. Jake has expressed no interest in seeing his parents."

Physical Needs: *Answer the questions:*

- *How is the general health of this child?*
- *When was the last time this child saw a pediatrician? A dentist? An eye doctor? An audiologist? A developmental pediatrician?*
- *Were any issues identified as a result of these appointments?*
- *Is the child's health generally good, fair, or poor?*
- *Has the child been ill recently?*
- *Has this child been diagnosed with any medical conditions?*
- *If so, what are the treatment regimens?*
- *Does the child appear to be getting proper nutrition? Are there any issues related to eating or eating habits?*
- *Does the child take any regular medications and if so, for what conditions?*
- *Does the child have proper clothing, shoes, and a coat?*
- *Does the child have access to age-appropriate books and toys?*
- *Is the child getting enough sleep?*
- *Is the child having issues with toilet training?*
- *Is the child wetting or soiling the bed at night?*
- *Are the child's basic needs being met in his or her current placement?*
- *Does the child feel safe in this placement?*

For example, you might write:

"Jake's needs are being met by his foster parents. He had not been to see a pediatrician in several years. Foster parents took Jake to see a pediatrician on 3/1/16 for a full check-up. Jake appears to be relatively healthy. The foster parents report his appetite is good and he sleeps well each night. They do report occasional nightmares, but Jake is easily comforted and goes right back to bed."

Safety Needs: Answer the questions:

- What type of home is the child living in?
- Is the home in good condition or in disrepair?
- If the child is an infant, does the home have safety covers on outlets, child locks on cabinet doors, and other safety features?
- Who else lives in the home? Are these individuals known to child welfare? Have they been background checked?
- Does the child have his or her own bed?
- Do caregivers have a good support system?
- Who cares for the child when the caregiver needs a break?
- Does anyone living in the home with the child have a substance abuse issue – either with alcohol or illegal substances?
- What discipline methods are utilized in the home?
- How does the child get to and from school?
- Does the child attend daycare? Is the daycare a safe place for the child?
- Is the child using a gaming system or computer with Internet service?
- Is the child supervised while using the Internet?
- Does the child have social media accounts? Is someone monitoring them?
- Is the child a teenager? Is he or she driving?
- Does the child appear to have a substance abuse issue?
- Is the child dating? Have the foster parents met the child's dates?
- Is the child in trial reunification with one or both of his or her parents?
- Are CASA's visits announced or unannounced?
- What safety concerns do you have for this child right now? Do you have any concerns for the child in the future?
- Is the child talking about self-harm or acting out self-harm behaviors?

For example, you might write:

“Jake appears to be completely safe in his foster home. The foster parents appear to be committed to caring for themselves, their children, and Jake.”

SUMMARY OF FACTS: This is a place to summarize the facts you've collected. For example:

1. Both Mr. and Mrs. Thomas have extensive criminal history and long-standing addictions to meth, K2, marijuana, and other drugs.
2. Jake Thomas has attended school sporadically and is educationally behind. He has been diagnosed with ADHD and is on an IEP.
3. Jake Thomas has expressed severe anger issues, including putting his foot through a wall in his bedroom when the foster parents told him it was time to stop playing his X-Box.

RECOMMENDATIONS: In every court report, you will list your recommendations, based upon the facts you have collected. You will want to ensure that you have adequately explained the factual basis for your recommendations in the body of your report. For example:

1. CASA recommends that both Clint Thomas and Cindy Thomas have a substance abuse assessment and follow all of the recommendations listed in the assessment. CASA is concerned that because of the

lengthy history of substance abuse, both Mr. and Mrs. Thomas need in-patient drug treatment and rehabilitation.

- 2. CASA recommends that Jake Thomas receive a mental health evaluation to assess for therapeutic needs relative to impulse control and anger issues. CASA was very concerned to hear the foster parent's report about Jake putting his foot through the wall in his bedroom because his time to play the X-Box was over.*
- 3. CASA recommends that Jake Thomas receive after-school tutoring from a high school student for math and reading help. CASA believes a male role model Jake can look up to would be a very good thing for him.*

ATTACHMENTS (LIST): *This is a place to list any attachments to your report. For example:*

- 1. Clint Thomas's criminal records from OSCN and ODCR.*
- 2. Cindy Thomas's criminal records from OSCN and ODCR.*
- 3. Jake Thomas's grade report and school attendance records.*

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by:

(After your Advocate Coordinator reviews your report and sends you a final draft to look over, you will sign the original. Your Advocate Coordinator will also sign the original, file the report and distribute copies to the parties to the case.)

[Name of CASA Volunteer]
CASA Volunteer

[Name of CASA Staff]
Advocate Coordinator

REMINDERS:

- 1. Per Oklahoma Supreme Court Administrative Order, CASA Reports to the Court are due to the court five (5) judicial days in advance of your court hearing. Please have a draft of your report to your Advocate Coordinator 10 days in advance of court so that it can be properly reviewed.*
- 2. If something happens in between the filing of your report and the day of court, you may file an Addendum to the Report or provide an oral update to the court.*
- 3. Be proud of your work and make sure that you have double-checked your factual information. Ensure that you've got first-hand information in your report.*
- 4. You may attach a picture of the children on your case to your report. This helps the judge visualize who the children are and to see that they are doing well.*
- 5. Conversely, you may attach pictures of anything concerning that you see as well – either in the home the child is currently living in or in the parental home.*
- 6. Do not be nervous about writing a report. **We are here to help you if you get stuck!***