

HOW TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

“Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent. We would not dare to conceive the things which are really mere commonplaces of existence. If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on, the strange coincidences, the plannings, the cross-purposes, the wonderful chains of events, working through generations, and leading to the most outre results, it would make all fiction with its conventionalities and foreseen conclusions most stale and unprofitable.” – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Complete Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

A wise judge once said, “As a CASA, you won’t need to watch soap operas again.” Like a drama with twists or a puzzle that is missing several pieces, your CASA case will contain mysteries that you will think about continually, but can only solve with time, perseverance, and spirited detective work.

CASA work is all about researching and investigating the circumstances surrounding a case. Good research and resourcefulness can make all the difference in the outcomes for the children and families served by the CASA program. Maintain a natural curiosity about the environment in which the children, parents, and others on your case are operating. Ask questions and dive deeper into the inner workings of the families you are interacting with.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Sherlock Holmes wanted to “gently remove the roofs” of the people in his city so that he could peer in at the inner workings of their lives. The Internet and social media platforms allow us to do just that.

The Internet is a CASA volunteer’s best friend. Social media platforms have increased the amount of information available at the click of a button. Many people put all sorts of interesting information on social media, including what they ate for dinner, where they are going, and who they are hanging around.

Finding the parents on social media isn’t difficult, although some will use nicknames or pseudonyms. Look for multiple accounts, as well. Check Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram. It is not unusual to find boyfriends/girlfriends, drug or alcohol usage, or other illicit activities shared on social media. Printing the pages allows you to retain the information for incorporation in your Report to the Court. Note that when using Snapchat, posts are set to automatically self-destruct. If you see something there, take a screen shot.

It is generally true that the best predictor of future behavior is current or past behavior. It’s a good idea to search court records on the Oklahoma Supreme Court Network, the Oklahoma District Court Records, and the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Offender Lookup. In addition, you can check to see if someone is registered as a violent or sex offender on the Department of Corrections website.

SOME PLACES TO CONDUCT ONLINE RESEARCH

Oklahoma Supreme Court Network
www.oscn.net

Oklahoma District Court Records
www1.odcr.com

Facebook www.facebook.com

Twitter www.twitter.com

Snapchat Download app on your Smartphone

Instagram Download app on your Smartphone

Google www.google.com

Oklahoma Department of Corrections
<https://www.ok.gov/doc>

To check the Oklahoma Supreme Court Network:

1. Type in www.oscn.net in your browser.
2. Choose “Court Records” at the top of the page.
3. Choose “Search OSCN Court Records under “Search”
4. Enter the Last, First, and Middle Names under “Search by Party.”
5. Click “Go.” Records will be organized by county or jurisdiction.

To check the Oklahoma District Court Records:

1. Type in www1.odcr.com in your browser.
2. Enter Last, First Names under “Party Name.”
3. Click “Search for Cases.”

To conduct a complete background check for the entire State of Oklahoma, you will need to check both OSCN and ODCR.

To check the Oklahoma Department of Corrections website:

1. Type in <https://www.ok.gov/doc/> in your browser.
2. Choose “Offender Info” at the top of the page.
3. Choose “Offender Lookup” from the drop-down menu to search inmate data.
4. Choose “Sex Offender Lookup” from the drop-down menu to search for registered sex offender information.
5. Choose “Violent Offender Lookup” from the drop-down menu to search for violent offender information.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JAIL RECORDS

Police departments and sheriff’s departments also are good places to investigate. Police reports are available to you and should be accessed. Most sheriff’s departments are responsible for the county jails and are a good source of information about inmates, charges, and bonds. For the David L. Moss Jail in Tulsa County, search <http://iic.tulsacounty.org/Home.aspx> and search the database to see the current Tulsa County inmate roster.

GOOD PRACTICES

When children are placed back home in trial reunification, a really good practice is to make unannounced visits to the home. It is generally true that if you want to see how people really live, popping by unexpectedly gives you a fairly good read on the day-to-day living environment. When engaging in this type of work, CASA volunteers have found drugs and drug paraphernalia on coffee tables or an unauthorized boyfriend living in a home where a child has been placed. This is important information the courts need to make sure the children are completely safe.

Your Advocate Coordinator is available to help you with researching your case. If you have other questions or need more information, send us a question at info@cano-casa.com.