

The News

AUGUST 2025



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF WEST CENLA



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CASA OF WEST CENLA

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Words from the Director



Education is more than just a path to academic success—it's a lifeline, especially for children in foster care.

For these young individuals, school can be one of the few consistent and stabilizing forces in their lives. It offers not only knowledge but a sense of normalcy, belonging, and hope for a brighter future.

At CASA of West CenLA, we are deeply committed to ensuring that every child in foster care and assigned to our agency has access to the resources, support, and encouragement they need to thrive in their education.

As a community, I believe that we can work together to help meet the needs for tutoring, mentorship, or simply a safe space to study; every effort counts.

Together, we can break the cycle of instability and help these children unlock their full potential through the power of learning.

Don't hesitate to contact us, together we can create a positive change in a child's life.

Tommy





Supervisor Tips Educational Advocacy



Understand Foster Youth Unique Educational Needs

- **Recognize trauma's impact:** Foster children may struggle with concentration, trust, and emotional regulation due to past trauma.
- **Expect gaps in learning:** Frequent moves and instability often lead to missed instruction and inconsistent academic progress.
- **Prioritize stability:** Consistent routines at home and school help foster a sense of safety and focus.



Advocate Within the School System

- **Build relationships with educators:** Meet teachers early, share a one-page profile of the child's strengths, triggers, and calming strategies.
- **Know children's rights:** Under ESSA, foster children have protections like the right to remain in their school of origin and access to transportation.
- **Request evaluations:** If needed, ask for assessments to determine eligibility for IEPs or 504 Plans — and do it in writing.
- **Document everything:** Keep a log of meetings, emails, and decisions to ensure accountability and follow-through.



Be the Child's Voice at School

- **Attend school meetings:** Participate in IEP, 504, and parent-teacher conferences to offer insights and ensure services align with the child's emotional and academic needs.
- **Monitor progress:** Regularly check in with teachers, review report cards, and ensure accommodations are being implemented.
- **Raise concerns:** If the child isn't getting the support they need, CASA volunteers can voice concerns to the judge in court reports.



Promote Empowerment and Emotional Wellness

- **Normalize setbacks:** Foster kids often feel defeated by academic struggles—CASA volunteers can remind them that progress is more important than perfection.
- **Encourage self-advocacy:** Help children understand their rights and learn to speak up for themselves in age-appropriate ways.
- **Celebrate growth:** Highlight improvements—no matter how small—and report them in your court summaries to showcase resilience.



Provide Supportive Resources

- **Seek tutoring and academic support:** Seek out local programs or online tools to fill learning gaps.
- **Encourage extracurriculars:** Sports, arts, and clubs build confidence and social skills.
- **Suggest creating a calm study space:** A quiet, organized area at home can make a big difference in focus and motivation.

Training

Pre-Service Training - New Advocates

Welcome

- September 9, 2025
- 5:30pm - 7:30pm
- Location to be determined

Session 1

- September 16, 2025
- 5:30pm - 8:45pm - dinner meal included
- Location to be determined

Session 2

- September 23, 2025
- 5:30pm - 8:45pm - dinner meal included
- Location to be determined

Session 3

- September 30, 2025
- 5:30pm - 8:45pm - dinner meal included
- Location to be determined

Session 4

- October 7, 2025
- 5:30pm - 8:45pm - dinner meal included
- Location to be determined

Session 5

- October 14, 2025
- 5:30pm - 8:45pm - dinner meal included
- Location to be determined



For more information about becoming an advocate, please scan the QR code.

In-Service Training - Current Advocates

August 21, 2025

- Joe's Italian, DeRidder
- 5:30pm - 7:30pm
- Educational Advocacy

September 18, 2025

- Location to be determined
- 5:30pm - 6:30pm
- Collaborating with Multiple Agencies

October 16, 2025

- Location to be determined
- 5:30pm - 6:30pm
- Ethical Dilemmas and Decision Making

November 20, 2025

- Location to be determined
- 5:30pm - 8:45pm
- Attorney Panel

What's Happening!

August 2025

BEAUREGARD PARISH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	National Night Out Comedy Gun Show 6:30pm War Memorial	National Night Out 5:30pm Beauregard Fairgrounds		First Day of School 4-Day and Hybrid School Weeks		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Free Acting Classes 1:30pm City Space		CASA Board Meeting 12pm-1pm DeRidder War Memorial			Courtesy Concert Free Food and Drink 7pm Wooten Theater	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
						White Linen Night All Day RealArt Gallery
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

What's Happening!

August 2025

VERNON PARISH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
						Back to School Bash 8am-1pm
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	First Day of School					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6



Student Tips for the New Year



Elementary Students



1. Ease Into a Routine

- Gradually adjust sleep and wake times at least a week before school starts.
- Practice morning routines like getting dressed, eating breakfast, and packing backpacks.



2. Talk About Feelings & Expectations

- Have open conversations about what the new year might bring—new teachers, classmates, or subjects.
- Validate any nervousness and frame changes as exciting opportunities.



3. Visit the School Ahead of Time

- Attend orientation or back-to-school nights to familiarize kids with the building and staff.
- Play on the school playground or walk the route to school to build comfort.



4. Create a Homework & Study Space

- Set up a quiet, organized area at home with supplies ready for daily use.
- Establish a consistent time for homework to build routine and reduce stress.



5. Focus on Nutrition & Hydration

- Start the day with a healthy breakfast that includes protein.
- Send water instead of sugary drinks to help with focus and hydration.



6. Set Small, Achievable Goals

- Encourage kids to set fun goals like reading a book each month or learning a new skill.
- Celebrate milestones to build confidence and motivation.



7. Teach Coping & Social Skills

- Role-play how to handle bullying or unkind behavior and identify safe adults at school.
- Practice self-regulation techniques like deep breathing or journaling after tough days.



8. Make It Fun!

- Let kids help pick out school supplies or choose their first-day outfit.
- Create excitement by talking about favorite subjects, friends, or upcoming school events.





Student Tips for the New Year

Middle School Students



1. Build a Consistent Routine

- Start adjusting sleep schedules at least a week before school begins.
- Create a morning checklist to streamline getting ready and reduce stress.

2. Get Familiar with the School

- Tour the building with a class schedule in hand to reduce anxiety about new surroundings.
- Attend orientation events to meet teachers and staff.

3. Set Clear Expectations & Goals

- Talk about academic and behavioral expectations—emphasize effort over perfection.
- Encourage students to set personal goals like improving in a subject or joining a new club.



4. Address Social & Emotional Changes

- Discuss how to handle peer pressure, bullying, and friendship shifts.
- Normalize feelings of nervousness and offer coping strategies like journaling or talking to a trusted adult.

5. Prioritize Nutrition & Hydration

- Start the day with a protein-rich breakfast to boost focus.
- Pack water instead of sugary drinks to stay hydrated and alert.



6. Stay Organized

- Use color-coded folders or digital planners to manage multiple classes.
- Keep a tidy backpack and locker to reduce stress and save time.

7. Encourage Social Exploration

- Join clubs or sports to meet new friends and build confidence.
- Maintain old friendships while being open to new ones—balance is key.

8. Foster Independence

- Let students pack their own lunch or choose their outfits to build ownership.
- Teach time management by helping them plan homework, activities, and downtime.





Student Tips for the New Year

High School Students



1. Master Time Management

- Use a planner or app to track assignments, tests, and extracurriculars.
- Break big tasks into smaller steps and set deadlines to avoid last-minute stress.



2. Stay Organized

- Keep folders or binders for each subject and clean out your backpack weekly.
- Organize digital files and notes for easy access and review.



3. Build Strong Study Habits

- Set aside consistent time for homework and test prep.
- Create a distraction-free study space with good lighting and supplies.



4. Set Academic & Personal Goals

- Aim for a strong GPA from day one—grades from freshman year count toward college.
- Choose goals that reflect both academic growth and personal interests.



5. Advocate for Yourself

- Ask questions in class and seek help when needed—teachers notice effort.
- Build relationships with teachers and counselors for support and guidance.



6. Manage Stress & Mental Health

- Practice mindfulness, journaling, or physical activity to reduce anxiety.
- Talk openly about challenges—support systems matter more than ever.



7. Engage Socially & Explore Interests

- Join clubs, sports, or volunteer groups to meet new people and build skills.
- Balance social life with academics—both are important for growth.



8. Fuel Your Body & Mind

- Eat a protein-rich breakfast and stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Avoid excessive caffeine or energy drinks that can disrupt focus and sleep.





Volunteer Spotlights



Vernon

Cyndi



Beauregard

Jami





Board and Staff Spotlights



Board Secretary Erin



Advocate Supervisor Jessica

