

May 2026

This Issue...



Coordinator's Corner 2

Calendars 3-5

CASA Kudos 6

Birthdays/Anniversaries 7

Ask the Coordinator 8-9

Foster Care Story 10-11

Best for Babies 12

Nature Ninos 13

Dependency 101 14

CASAs Connecting 15

Book Club 16

Mental Health Conference 17

Free Summer Meals 18

Head Start 19-20

Family Safety Checklist 21-22

League of Extraordinary
Grandparents 23

Wrapped in Love 24

Celebration Cards 24

FaceBook and Numbers 25

Contact Us 26-27

Foster Care Month

Noteworthy Facts About Foster Care

- Approximately 368,000 children were in foster care in the US in fiscal year 2023, according to federal data.
- The average age of a child entering foster care is about 7 years old, though children of all ages, from infants to teenagers, are in need of placement.
- Around 20,000 young people age out of the foster care system each year without a permanent family.
- Foster parents in the US receive a monthly stipend to help cover the costs of caring for a child, though amounts vary widely by state.
- CASA volunteers advocate for approximately 275,000 children in the court system each year.

<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/foster-care-month/>

Coordinators' Corner



DID YOU KNOW THAT WE HAVE BOOKS FOR YOUR CASA KIDDOS? THESE BOOKS HAVE BEEN GENEROUSLY DONATED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE PRESCOTT PUBLIC LIBRARY. STOP BY THE OFFICE TO PICK UP ONE OR TWO FOR YOUR KIDDO. AS YOU CAN SEE WE ARE OVERFLOWING!



HERITAGE PARK
ZOOLOGICAL
SANCTUARY



**DONT
FORGET
ABOUT
OUR
PASSES
AND
MOVIE
TICKETS!**

Child and Family Team Meetings

To receive information about an upcoming CFT with:

CFSS: please email: dawnr@cfssinc.com

Polara Health: please email: whenthecft@polarahealth.com

Spectrum: please email: susans@spectrumhg.org

Please give the clinics 48 hours to reply to your email

MAY

2026

PRESCOTT

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

1

4

5

FTC 2:00

6

7

8

Hearings

FCRB

FCRB

11

12

13

CASA
APPRECIATION
EVENT

14

15

Hearings

18

19

FTC 2:00

20

CASAS
CONNECTING
9 AM

21

22

Hearings

25

CLOSED

MEMORIAL
DAY

26

27

28

TELE-CASAS
CONNECTING
9 AM

29

JUNE 2026

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FTC 2:00

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CLOSED
MEMORIAL
DAY

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29

CASA Kudos



Ellen D, Joan F, and Marilyn V: All hit the ground running after completing CASA Academy. Each has already been assigned their first case and are paired with a Mentor!



Jan L, Deb S, and Jo Z: Our first Mentors are officially assigned and are already supporting their new CASAs, providing valuable guidance and encouragement during their first six months.



Kudos to Laura P. for her steadfast advocacy through complex adversity in her case. Despite the many moves and placements throughout the child's life, you have been the one constant, providing stability, support, and a consistent voice. Your dedication truly makes a difference.



Kudos to newly assigned CASA Shayla M. for taking on a new case and diving right in! Your willingness to step up and get involved so quickly is appreciated, and your advocacy will make a meaningful impact.



Kudos to Laura Ashbrook for seeing her case through to reunification.



Kudos to Karen Knecht for seeing her case through to reunification and remaining involved after closure 😊



Kudos to Scott Nave for seeing his case through to reunification.



Kudos to Ken and Jill Reinstadler for continuing to try to connect with their teens.



Kudos to Diane J. and Laura P. for participating in the CASA panel 😊



Kudos to Lynn M. for being appointed to a new case!



Kudos to Selin S. for tackling her first court report!



Kudos to Pat McKay for taking a new case in Phoenix



Kudos to Patricia Bradford, Greg Byrum and Nancy Taylor for participating in the CASA panel for our final module.

Kudos to Bob Arnett, Janice Mauz and Kathy McCormick for helping out at the Pinwheel Party.

Kudos to Nancy Taylor and Bev Medlyn for working together so well to advocate for a large family.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

**Roberta
Hatch
5/8**

**Karen
Deegan
5/7**

**Julie
Strovas
5/9**

**Lynn
Moffatt
5/17**

**Selin
Sozer
5/16**

**Kim
Naugle
5/20**

**Bob
Robinette
5/11**

**Meg
Rowan
5/13**

**Laura
Pratt
5/29**

Happy Anniversary

Jeni O'Callaghan

Cathy Johnson 9 years

8 years

**Scott Nave
3 years**

Janice Lisboa

4 years

**Debbie
Throckmorton
1 year**

Ask the
Coordinator

STANDING IN THE GAP:

HELPING CASA CHILDREN NAVIGATE BULLYING

By Amy Fillingim
Program Coordinator II

MAY 2025



You may be the one safe adult who notices.

Bullying continues to impact children across the country, and youth involved in the dependency system may be especially vulnerable. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, approximately 1 in 5 students report being bullied at school. For children in foster care, bullying may stem from placement changes, clothing differences, academic struggles, behavioral responses to trauma, or stigma associated with being in care.

Bullying is not simply “kids being kids.” The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that children who experience bullying are at increased risk for anxiety, depression, school avoidance, academic decline, substance use, and long-term emotional distress. In severe cases, bullying has been linked to self-harm and suicidal ideation.

As CASAs, your consistent presence can make an extraordinary difference.

What Does Bullying Look Like?

Bullying may be:

- Physical, such as hitting or pushing
- Verbal, including teasing, name calling, or threats
- Social or relational, such as exclusion or spreading rumors
- Cyberbullying through texts, social media, or gaming platforms

Children in dependency may not immediately disclose bullying. They may minimize it or feel shame.

Signs a Child May Be Experiencing Bullying

- Reluctance or refusal to attend school
- Unexplained injuries or damaged belongings
- Changes in mood, irritability, or withdrawal
- Declining grades
- Loss of interest in activities
- Changes in sleep or appetite

Even subtle changes matter. Trust your instincts and remain curious.

“Children in foster care often carry invisible burdens. When bullying adds to that weight, one steady, trusted adult can change the trajectory of their story.”

Signs a Child May Be Engaging in Bullying Behavior

Sometimes children who have experienced trauma attempt to regain a sense of control by exerting power over others.

Look for:

- Frequent aggression or intimidation
- Blaming others for conflicts
- Lack of empathy when discussing peers
- School disciplinary referrals

Approach these moments with accountability and compassion, not shame.

ARIZONA AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

- Arizona Department of Education (www.azed.gov)
- StopBullying.gov (www.stopbullying.gov)
- PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center (www.pacer.org/bullying)
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Call or text 988 or visit www.988lifeline.org

Helpful Language for CASA Conversations

With the child:

- “How have things been going at school lately?”
- “Do you feel safe there?”
- “That sounds really hurtful. I’m glad you told me.”
- “You deserve to feel safe and respected.”

If the child may be bullying:

- “Help me understand what happened.”
- “What do you think the other student felt?”
- “We can work on better ways to handle that.”

With placements:

- “Have you noticed any changes in school attitude or behavior?”
- “Is the school aware of any peer conflict?”
- “Would it be helpful to request a meeting with the school?”

Did you know? **Arizona schools are required** to have **anti bullying policies**. Encourage caregivers to communicate concerns in writing and request support meetings when needed.

Quick Visit Checklist

Before or during your visit, consider:

- Who does the child sit with at lunch?
- Do they feel safe at school?
- Who would they tell if something upsetting happened?
- Are there recent behavior or mood changes?

Your calm, consistent presence creates space for honesty.

Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities.



Since 2020, Tanja has provided a place to call home for 26 children and youth. Of those young people, she has adopted five, soon to be six. Tanja has had a full-circle experience with the child welfare system. Growing up, she entered the system and lived with several foster families. After having children of her own, those kids were placed in State custody, encouraging Tanja to get sober so she could reunite with them. Years later, Tanja and her husband, William, became kin caregivers for William's grandchildren, eventually transitioning to non-family foster caregivers for others. Ever since, Tanja has kept her house and her heart open to children and youth in need of a loving family. She is celebrating 21 years of sobriety.

"When my own kids got taken and got put into custody, them getting put into custody actually saved my life. That's when I got clean and sober," Tanja said. "I wanted to give back, and I knew that I could give kids what they were longing for, which was a family and a home—and a healthy one at that."

Having experienced the foster care system from so many different perspectives, Tanja has learned many lessons. As a deeply loving, nurturing mother, it comes as no surprise that her advice for others centers on providing the best support possible for the children and youth who come into their home. This National Foster Care Month, she hopes to spread the word about the importance of supporting mental health, listening to and empowering young people, and providing older youth with lifelong connections.

Supporting mental health. A cause that Tanja champions on a daily basis is supporting mental health. In Tanja's experience, many people often assume that a child will thrive once they end up in a foster home because they've left a situation that the State deemed unsafe. This assumption, however, overlooks the toll that all these changes have on a young person's mental health. Living with strangers in foster care—surrounded by new routines, foods, smells, and more—is a big life change. Tanja recommends that foster caregivers talk to youth about therapy and reach out to their caseworkers, agencies, or community mental health organizations to proactively arrange a mental health assessment before issues or challenges arise. She tells her children to think of therapy as a living diary:

That's my statement to all my kids that come in. That therapist gets to be their living diary that nobody gets to read. You get to go in, you get to tell all your secrets and all your hurts and all your joys and all your fears, and nobody gets to go open that book and read it. But you get to share it, and you have somebody that can help you get through those things that you don't understand.

Tanja has turned her passion for mental health into a career and works for the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health as a behavioral health case manager and family support provider.

The importance of listening. In Tanja's family, one of the first things that young people who enter her home learn is that they simply need to ask to "assume the position" when they need to talk to Tanja about something. The "position" involves Tanja sitting on the floor while the young person sits across from her on a piece of furniture. The elevated stance places the young person in a position of power, allowing them to feel comfortable speaking up about whatever it is they need.

"It's been empowering for all the kids in my house," Tanja said. "I let them know when they come through the door that they have a voice and it will be heard. So, if you have something to say, I'm going to listen. I will listen, but you have to speak because I can't fix what I don't know."

Forming lifelong connections. A major part of Tanja's fostering journey has been her commitment to older youth and teenagers. All too often, older youth age out of the foster care system and are left to fend for themselves without adequate support. Tanja seeks to change that narrative by forming lasting, authentic bonds with the young people who enter her home. In child welfare, this type of connection is often called "relational permanency" and can benefit all youth, including those who do not achieve legal permanency before aging out.

"Teens get left behind," Tanja said. "Kids who age out have no one to be accountable to so they can keep going in the right direction. They don't have the ability to say, 'Oh, my mom would be so disappointed' or 'my dad would be so disappointed.' Instead, there is no one to disappoint and no reason to do the right thing. So, in an aged-out kid's mind: 'No one cares what I do, so what's the point? When I'm down on my luck, who do I call?'"

Tanja and her children have been through a lot together, from the hard times, such as the loss of her husband in October 2022, to the exciting ones, such as her oldest adopted daughter planning to attend college next year. As for the future, Tanja doesn't plan to stop fostering anytime soon.

"Being a foster parent is a blessing," she said. "And as much as you can save them, they can save you."



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau



YOU'RE INVITED to join us for **Yavapai Best for Babies**

First Friday of the Month*
10 A.M. - 12 P.M.
Prevent Child Abuse Arizona Office

What is it?

The monthly Yavapai Best for Babies meeting brings together child welfare professionals and community members to discuss what we can do to ensure best outcomes for infants and toddlers in foster or kinship care.

Who should attend?

Child Welfare Professionals • Foster Parents and Kinship Families • Foster Parent Licensing and Training Personnel • CASAs • DCS/DDD Supervisors and Caseworkers • Parent Aides • Visit Coaches • Court Personnel * Attorneys • Guardians ad litem • Behavioral Health Professionals • Early Care / Education Providers • Providers of Services to Families • Anyone who works with or cares for young children

*No meeting July 2026

 **Prevent Child Abuse** **3298 Bob Dr, Prescott Valley**
Arizona **Questions? Email meghan@pcaaz.org**

We'd love your help expanding the reach of our Yavapai Best for Babies network. Please consider inviting colleagues and community partners who are passionate about supporting infants, toddlers, and families involved in foster or kinship care with the attached invitation.

Yavapai Best for Babies meets in-person on the first Friday of each month from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Prevent Child Abuse Arizona office (3298 Bob Dr., Prescott Valley). These monthly meetings bring together child welfare professionals and community members to collaborate, share ideas, and strengthen outcomes for our youngest children. **Our next meeting is May 1st!**

The more perspectives we bring to the table, the stronger our impact will be. Your invitation could help connect someone to this important work.



Nature Niños



2025-2026

10:00am - 12:00pm

One Saturday a month

Go Explore!



Park Rangers and community partners lead child-centered play events at a different family friendly park each month. At every Nature Niños event there are take-home items, a healthy snack, creative nature activities, story time, all encouraging us to Leave No Trace and make Healthy Choices. Nature Niños events are led by Park Rangers and community partners with a strong understanding of child development and experience leading child-centered outdoor programs.

August 2nd

West Granite Creek

Splash Pad

350 N. Montezuma Street
Prescott, AZ 86301

September 6th

TEVA Community

Prescott National Forest

2900 N. Granite Basin Rd.
Prescott, AZ 86305

October 4th

Stricklin Park

1751 Sherwood Dr. Prescott,
AZ 86303

November 1st

Pioneer Park

Kayla's Hands

1200 Commerce Drive
Prescott, AZ 86305



December

No event

Go explore with our
Junior Ranger Guidebook

January 3rd

Vista Park

1701 Sarafina Drive
Prescott, AZ 86301

February 7th

Community

Nature Center

300 William Valley Rd
Prescott, AZ 86301

March 7th

Watson Lake

Upper Ramada

3101 Watson Lake Drive
Prescott, AZ 86301

April 18th

Prescott Earth Day

Downtown Courthouse

120 S. Cortez Street
Prescott, AZ 86301

May 2nd

Goldwater Lake

Upper

2900 S. Goldwater Lake Road
Prescott, AZ 86303

June 6th

Granite Creek Park

554 6th Street
Prescott, AZ 86301

July 11th

Antelope Park

6933 N. Cattletrack Road
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

PRESCOTT
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

YAVAPAI
COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

NATURAL
HISTORY
INSTITUTE



Cooperative Extension
Yavapai County

CHICANOS
POR LA CAUSA

step up kids



girl scouts
LEAVE
NO TRACE



CFSS CHILD & FAMILY
SUPPORT SERVICES

These organizations are equal opportunity providers.

DEPENDENCY 101

FOR KINSHIP & FOSTER PLACEMENTS

Learn More About Your Role in the Dependency Process



WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026 | 5:30PM – 6:30PM

CAMP VERDE SUPERIOR COURTHOUSE
2840 North Commonwealth Drive
Camp Verde, AZ 86322

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- ✓ How a dependency hearing works
- ✓ The role of each person in the courtroom
- ✓ What to expect during hearings
- ✓ Your role in the dependency process

**Training Certificates provided
to placements who attend**

PRESENTERS INCLUDE:

- Judge Young
- Assistant Attorney General
- DCS Case Manager
- Child's Attorney
- Guardian ad Litem (GAL)
- Parent's Attorney
- Court Appointed
Special Advocate (CASA)
- Behavioral Health
- Kinship/Foster
Placement



CHILDCARE PROVIDED BY DCS

Childcare is for dependent children only.

RSVP REQUIRED BY MAY 8, 2026



JEN BAHR



928-554-8903



JBAHR@COURTS.AZ.GOV

ASAs Connecting

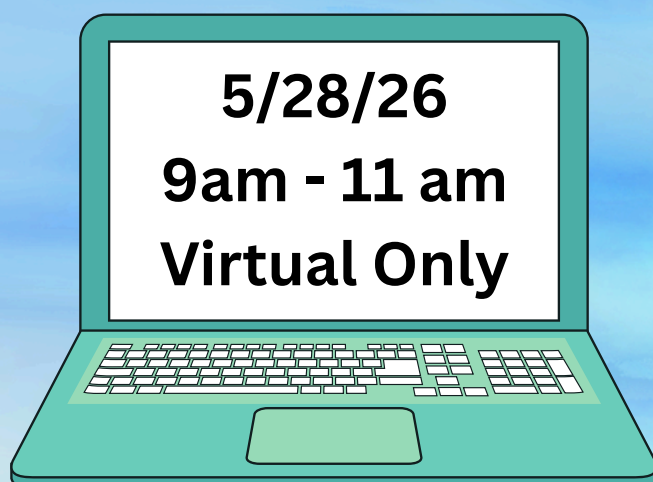
**Attend our
CASA Peer
Support Group
to help you be
more effective
on your case**



5/28/26

9am - 11 am

Virtual Only



5/20/26

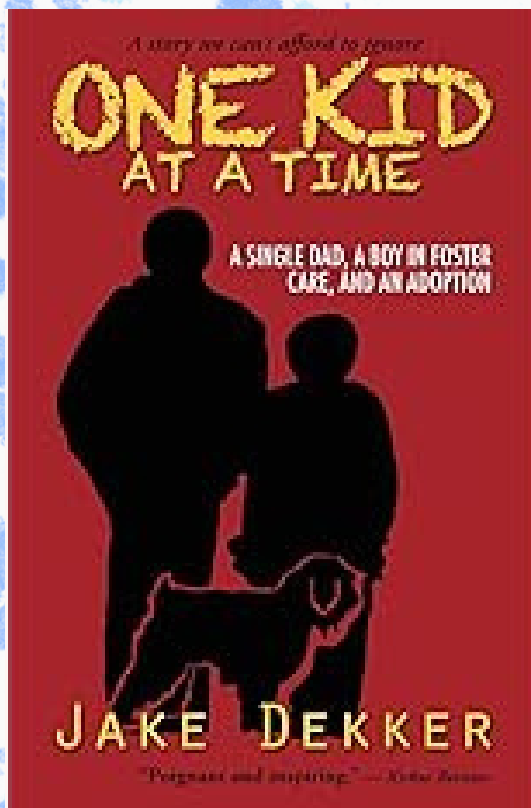
9am - 11 am

in person at the JJC

Watch your email for
link to this meeting
during that week!

Because the work of a CASA is confidential, it is important to have a safe place to talk about your case. ALL CASAs are highly encouraged to attend a CASA support group. This support group provides lively and informative discussions. The attendees include a mix of veteran and new CASAs and CASA staff. These discussions can help you understand system issues, procedures, identify needs and solve unanswered questions. CASAs Connecting qualifies for training hours!

Book Club



This true, heartwarming story reveals that miracles occur in everyday life. Enjoyable and uplifting, One Kid at a Time will empower--and encourage--everyone who reads it.

Danny had no chance. His mother abandoned him. His father in prison didn't know him. His grandmother beat him so badly that the doctors couldn't count the bruises. He lived nonstop days of unending anxiety, loneliness and terror. Ordered into foster care, the system isolated, drugged and betrayed him.

Jake lived the good life. Warm friendships, plenty of money and freedom to do what he enjoyed. From the outside he had the perfect existence. But inside he longed for a child.



Books Available

IN THE CASA OFFICE

**JUNE
8TH
9:30 AM**



Save the Date

Yavapai Mental Health Conference: Hands On!



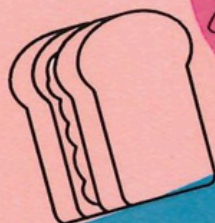
One-day education and awareness event for professionals, advocates, & community members. Keynote speakers, break-out sessions, & networking.

July 28th, 2026
Cliff Castle Hotel
Camp Verde, AZ

Sponsored by:



FREE SUMMER MEALS! SEVEN DAY MEAL PACK PICK UP



FREE



HUSD Child
Nutrition

IMPORTANT

You do not have to live within HUSD boundaries. Any family with children 18 and younger in the quad cities that are able to pick up meals from one of these locations are encouraged to register.

Locations:

1. Humboldt Elementary School - 2750 S. Corral Street **OR**
2. Pronghorn Ridge Middle School - 6411 N. Robert Road

Time:

Meal pack pick up is 7AM to 3PM only on dates listed below

Pickup Dates:

Monday, June 1st

Monday, June 8th

Monday, June 15th

Monday, June 22nd

Monday, June 29th

Monday, July 6th

Monday, July 13th

Monday, July 20th

**Register
Now**

SCAN HERE



No proof of residency or income is required! All children 1-18 years old qualify for **free** meals over the summer months regardless of what school district they attend. **Registration is required.** Scan the QR code above or visit: <https://forms.gle/dMHM7quiasvJtSqG6> to register now! Call 928-759-5017 if you are unable to register online.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

NACOG HEAD START IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

NACOG Head Start
serves families 0-5 years of age and
pregnant moms.

HOW TO APPLY

- ✓ **SCAN QR CODE**
- ✓ **GET A PAPER APPLICATION AT**
 **WWW.NACOG.ORG**
- ✓ **TO APPLY VIA PHONE, EMAIL:**
nacoghs@nacog.org For an appointment



ENGLISH



SPANISH

TRANSPORTATION IS NOT
PROVIDED BUT WE CAN HELP
WITH RESOURCES



NACOG EARLY HEAD START HOME BASED OPTION

Serves children from 0-3 years of age and
pregnant moms.



Transportation is not
provided, but we can help with
resources.



ENGLISH



SPANISH

We Focus On:

You being the First, Best and Most Important teacher for your child.

Building your child's development OR your healthy pregnancy.

Providing individual developmental and health screenings.

Building child-parent learning opportunities on making your daily life and routines the primary learning tool and classroom for your child.

Providing bi-weekly "playgroups" with stories, music and hands on activities.

COLOR ME & KNOW ME!

YOUR FAMILY OUTING & ONLINE SAFETY BEE CHECKLIST



OUTING & CROWD SAFETY



Mental Snapshot:
TAKE A PHOTO OF
YOUR CHILD'S CLOTHES



Bright Colors:
DRESS THEM IN
COLORFUL CLOTHES



Meeting Spot:
PICK A CLEAR
LOCATION TO RE-MEET



"Two Big Steps" Rule:
TEACH CHILDREN
TO STAY CLOSE



ONLINE & DIGITAL SAFETY



Common Areas:
KEEP DEVICES IN
SHARED FAMILY ROOMS



Password Secrecy:
NEVER SHARE PASSWORDS,
EVEN WITH FRIENDS



No Strangers:
ONLY TALK TO PEOPLE
YOU KNOW IN PERSON



Report Discomfort:
TELL A PARENT IF
SOMETHING FEELS WEIRD



**BE A SUPER
SAFETY BEE!**



TAKE A MINUTE TO
PRACTICE RULES TOGETHER!

COLOR ME & KNOW ME!

MY SAFETY PLAN

1 MY SPECIAL PEOPLE

COLOREA



NAME 1 (PARENT)

NAME 2 (PARENT)

THEIR PHONE NUMBERS

PHONE 1

PHONE 2

2 OUR HOME ADDRESS

COLOREA



STREET

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE



3 WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

COLOREA



CALL
THIS
NUMBER!

911



TELL YOUR LOCATION

GET
OUT,
STAY
CALM

4 MY SAFE MEETING PLACE

COLOREA



A SAFE PLACE
OUTSIDE

5 MY SAFETY RULES



• _____

• _____

• _____

• _____

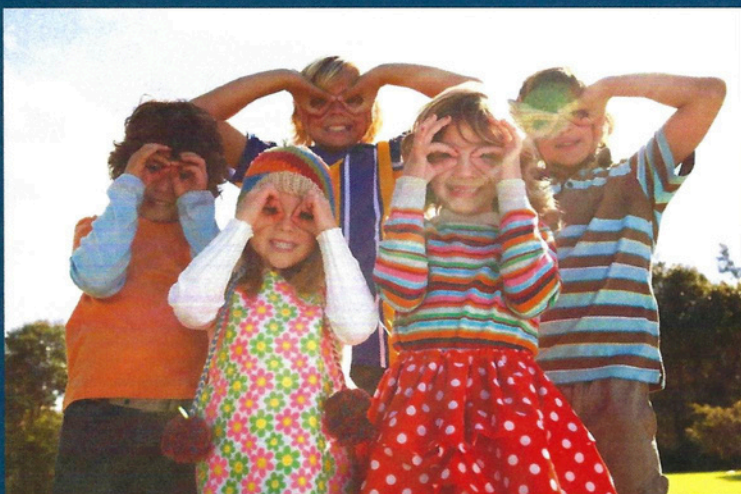




Come Have Fun!

with our Grand-Hearts for Grand-Kids

Free monthly event for kids ages 3 yrs (potty trained) to 11 who could benefit from a positive, nurturing grandparent morning of fun! 8944 East Sommer Drive, Bldg. B, Prescott Valley, AZ Registration is required; may be done on the website or at the door.



*3rd Saturday EVERY Month
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.*

**free for kids
ages 3-11**

Call - 928-899-8372

www.grandparentchamps.org

The Wrapped in Love (WiL) Diaper Bank provides diapers and supplies to struggling families across Yavapai County. Diapers are given to families through their affiliation with a service agency in the community. WiL promotes health and wellness by providing Yavapai County participants with diapers, wipes and referrals to local services. The overarching goal of WiL is to alleviate the cost of diapering and strengthen access to resources for struggling families in Yavapai County. The staff and volunteers at WiL coordinate with community agencies and family programs to ensure that needy families have access to the resources available to assist them in raising healthy children.

Yavapai County CASA Volunteers can request diapers for their foster or kinship families who are struggling to buy diapers.

If you would like to order diapers for your CASA baby's family, please contact your coordinator.

WRAPPED IN LOVE



CELEBRATION! *Gift Cards*

Does your CASA kiddo have a birthday coming up? Get a great report card or improve in a class they were struggling with? Successfully complete potty training? Any other event or milestone?

Stop by the CASA office to pick up a Celebration Gift Card! Thank you YCFKF!



**CASA OF
YAVAPAI
COUNTY**

LIKE US!

FOLLOW US!

facebook

April in Yavapai County

7

New Cases filed

11

Children taken
into DCS custody

198

Total number of
children in DCS Care

72

Number of CASAs

88

Children with a CASA

Kids who still need a CASA

110



Contact Information

www.casaofyavapaicounty.org

Prescott Office

(928) 771-3165

Amber Martin, Dependency Court Manager

email: amartin@courts.az.gov

Jessica Hines, Program Coordinator III
email: jhines@courts.az.gov

Amy Fillingim, Program Coordinator II
email: afillingim@courts.az.gov

Kathy McCormick, Mediator
email: kmccormi@courts.az.gov

Evelyn Hurtado, Admin Assistant I
email: ehurtado@courts.az.gov

Robin Fernandez Ames, Support Staff
email: rfernanzesames@courts.az.gov

Kristi Newman (928) 771-3398
Family Treatment Court Coordinator
email: knewman@courts.az.gov

Camp Verde Office

(928) 554-8900

Jen Bahr
Dependency Program Manager II
email: jbahr@courts.az.gov

Laura Gray
Program Coordinator I
email: lagray@courts.az.gov



www.YavapaiCASAforKids.org

P.O. Box 28070

Prescott Valley, AZ 86312

(928)445-0800



Board Members:

Lisa Watts, President

Greg Byrum, Vice President/Secretary

Cheryl Micholofki, Treasurer

Eileen Bond, Emeritus Member

Marlene Joy



**Yvonne Bartlett, Executive Director and
Interim contact for Grants for Kids Program**

Mona Stephens, Development

Questions about YC4KF?

email: info@yavapaicasaforkids.org