

Roles

Attorneys	The attorney provides legal advice and representation in court and Solution Focused Meetings. There are multiple attorneys involved in a CINA/TPR case. These include the Assistant County Attorney (representing the State), parent's attorneys (one for each parent), GALs, and attorneys for the children (if older).
CASA	CASAs are trained volunteers who work with one family at a time. They advocate on behalf of the child, and observe and report their observations.
DHS	The county attorney represents DHS. DHS investigates reports of child abuse/neglect. If the case needs the court's intervention, a CINA Petition is filed by the State. If the court agrees that its assistance is needed, DHS will do a social history and develop a case plan that sets forth what the parents must do to have the children returned to his/her home.
FCS	FCS workers typically assist with visitation (transportation and/or supervision) and parenting issues.
GAL	The <i>Guardian ad Litem</i> , or GAL, is an attorney who represents the legal interests of the child(ren) and advocates for the child's best interests. If the child is younger, one attorney may serve as both the GAL and attorney for the child. If the child is older, there may be a GAL to advocate for the best interests of the child <i>and</i> an attorney to represent the child's preferences and position.
Judge	There are no juries in juvenile court, so the judge is the final decision-maker in the case. S/he will preside over all hearings but <u>does not participate in SFMs or staffings typically.</u>
Parent Partners	Parent Partners work through DHS to provide mentoring to parents in juvenile (CINA) court. They have been where the client is now, and successfully reunified with their children.

While there may be other individuals involved in your case depending on the facts and issues, these are the primary ones you will encounter.