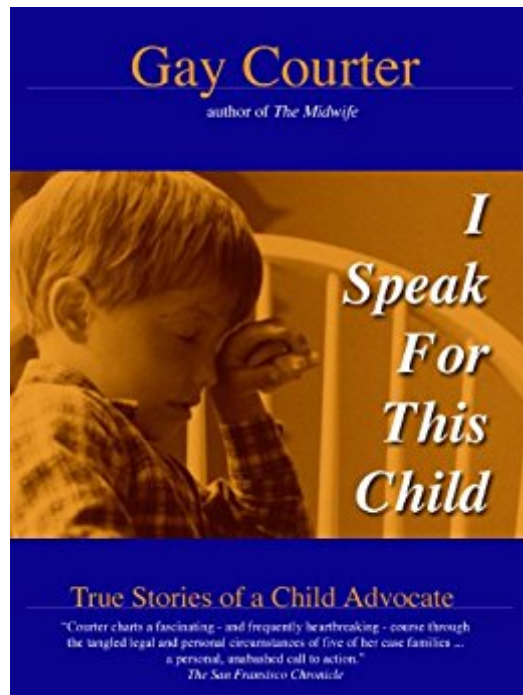


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# I Speak For This Child: True Stories Of A Child Advocate



## Synopsis

Bestselling novelist Gay Courter recounts her experiences as a Guardian ad Litem, a volunteer court-appointed special advocate (CASA) for children involved in the legal system due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Her story is both heartbreaking and heartwarming, and is an inspiration for anyone who has ever looked up from a newspaper and wondered, "What can I do to help?"

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This chronicle of the author's experiences as a Guardian Ad Litem in Florida will alternately enlighten you, frustrate you, inspire you, and make you angry. Much, I would expect, like being a Guardian. Besides giving others a blueprint on "how to help," and serving as an education on some of society's problems that most people wish they could ignore, this book is great reading, chock full of emotionally-involving, often heart-rending stories. Prepare to be engrossed.

As a freshman in college, I stumbled upon this book in the library, and soon after dedicated myself to improving the child welfare system. Courter's account is incredibly inspiring, emphasizing the

responsibility we all have to speak up for kids who have been wronged by our systems. I have now been a court appointed special advocate myself, and it is the most heartbreaking (but rewarding!) volunteer experience of my life. If you're looking for a book that will be difficult to put down, and stories of kids who are difficult to turn your back on, then this book is for you.

I am a CASA, and as such, was hoping that this book would have promoted that role a bit more (as the sample and forward mentioned the author was also in that role). Instead, I found this book to exaggerate it, and be more from the standpoint of a legal GAL, and a "look what I did, I'm a saint" story. Maybe the role of a CASA is different in the author's state, but in Michigan we cannot file motions or be parties to lawsuits - the GAL does that if necessary. In Michigan, we do form a relationship with the child and write court reports and make recommendations based on what the child wants, but it is very informal. We do not "throw our role around" like the author does in this book. We are privy to the confidential court files and do run into roadblocks from people who don't understand this but we can handle it without trouble. We work as a team with the caseworkers and GAL. The author acts like any good that happened was because of her alone and that she deserves an award or something. Quite self-serving. Although the foster care system has room for vast improvement and there are some bad caseworkers out there I know what a difficult job they have. The author seems to use this book as a means to bash them when the ones I have dealt with truly care about the kids but have an overload of cases which is why there are CASAs. What bothers me about many books on this subject is that the child's experience after disclosing is so horrible that I'm afraid it will deter some from telling what is happening to them. I wish more people would become CASAs but this book makes it sound like our role is so difficult and time-consuming and that we are fought every step of the way when that's not true. It takes a few hours a month to help a child in foster care as a CASA.

This is the best book I have ever read by a child advocate. Our system does not do right by abused children. If we don't get our system in better shape all these foster children will be in our prison system. And did you know it costs more to pay for prison than it does college!! Thanks Gay and keep up the great undying work you do!!! P.S. Everyone in the GAL office in Putnam County is reading your book and Ashley's

I found Ms. Couter's book when I was deciding to become a CASA in my California county. I am at the beginning of my journey and the laws governing my scope in California are different from those

in Florida outline in her experience, but what I hope to bring with me in my experiences with my own advocate children is the passion and unrelenting support that Ms. Counter exhibits in her accounts. I am grateful for those who have gone before me in this service and so generously proved support and inspiration, even at a distance as is the case with this inspiring book of unconditional love and courage. I am choosing to stand up for the rights of another because I can, because even in our flawed legal system the courts have seen fit to let someone like me with no experience other than my humanity to have a voice for a child, who at this stage in our social evolution, has no real voice in the system that controls their destiny. I have no doubt this will be one of the most challenging things I do in life, but I will have the experiences shared in this book to encourage me and inspire me to think outside the box and do whatever I can to fight for the rights and wishes of the people the court puts in my path.

This book gave me a greater understanding of how inept and incompetent CPS (Texas) truly is. On all the legal papers CPS files with the courts, 'IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHILDREN' is on the heading. That is not the case. Until my Grandson's CASA GAL showed up on the scene, they as well as my husband and I were in living hell. One visit from our GAL and life has changed for all of us. This book gave me a deeper understanding of how broken the "system" really is and how important CASA GAL's truly are for the children. This book was an eye opener for me. I just thought our case workers were lazy and incompetent. Seems to be the norm.

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