

**CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD[489]**

**Notice of Intended Action**

**Proposing rulemaking related to functions and provisions of the child advocacy board and providing an opportunity for public comment**

The Department of Health and Human Services hereby proposes to rescind Chapter 1, “Purpose and Function,” and to adopt a new Chapter 1, “Functions and Provisions of the Child Advocacy Board,” Iowa Administrative Code.

*Legal Authority for Rulemaking*

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 17A.3, 237.15 and 237.16.

*State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Executive Order 10 and Iowa Code sections 17A.3, 237.15 and 237.16.

*Purpose and Summary*

This proposed chapter was reviewed as part of the Red Tape Review process laid out in Executive Order 10. As a result of this review, restrictive terms were removed, areas that were duplicative were combined or eliminated, and editorial updates were made to processes and procedures to ensure they reflect current policies and procedures. The Child Advocacy Board (State Board) is charged with the responsibility of establishing procedures and protocols for the review of cases of children in foster care; establishing a training program for members of the State Board; establishing procedures and protocols for administering the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program; and annually reporting findings and making recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Department, child-placing agencies, and the State Court Administrator for dissemination to the Supreme Court and the chief judge of each judicial district.

*Regulatory Analysis*

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on March 4, 2026. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- March 24, 2026

*Fiscal Impact*

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

*Jobs Impact*

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

*Waivers*

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Department for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 441—Chapter 6.

*Public Comment*

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on May 5, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

Victoria L. Daniels  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Lucas State Office Building  
321 East 12th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Phone: 515.829.6021  
Email: [compliance.rules@hhs.iowa.gov](mailto:compliance.rules@hhs.iowa.gov)

*Public Hearing*

Public hearings at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

May 5, 2026 10 to 10:30 a.m.	Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 272 564 125 499 36 Passcode: fJ693L5F
May 5, 2026 2 to 2:30 p.m.	Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 298 531 309 907 97 Passcode: Tf3CP7ud

Persons who wish to make oral comments at a public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department and advise of specific needs.

*Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Rescind 489—Chapter 1 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 1  
FUNCTIONS AND PROVISIONS OF THE CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD

**489—1.1(237) Definitions.** The following definitions apply to the rules of the child advocacy board:

“*Approved*” means that the applicant has met the requirements to become a court appointed special advocate.

“*CASA volunteer*” or “*CASA*” or “*advocate*” means a person who is duly trained and approved by the department of health and human services for participation in the court appointed special advocate program and appointed by the court to represent the interest of a child in any judicial proceeding to which the child is a party or is called as a witness or relating to any dispositional order involving the child resulting from the proceeding. Unless otherwise directed by a court, the duties of a court appointed special advocate with respect to a child are pursuant to Iowa Code section 237.24.

“*Case permanency plan*” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 232.2(6).

“Coach” or “CASA coach” means a duly approved court appointed special advocate volunteer who has received additional training to assist the coordinator by overseeing facets of the court appointed special advocate’s case work.

“Court appointed special advocate” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 232.2(12).

“Family” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 237.15(4).

“Fictive kin” means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 232.2(24).

“Person or court responsible for the child” means the department, including but not limited to the department, agency, or individual who is the guardian of a child by court order issued by the juvenile or district court and has the responsibility of the care of the child, or the court having jurisdiction over the child.

“State board” means the child advocacy board created pursuant to Iowa Code section 237.16.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3, 237.15, and 237.16.

#### **489—1.2(237) Membership and term.**

**1.2(1)** The state board is created within the department. Membership and terms of appointment are detailed in Iowa Code section 237.16(1).

**1.2(2)** The state board shall meet as necessary, as set forth in Iowa Code section 237.16(2).

*a.* A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members. When a quorum is present, a position is carried by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present.

*b.* Minutes of state board meetings are available on the department’s website.

*c.* Notice of each meeting shall be given pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 21.

*d.* When the chairperson of the state board determines that a special or electronic meeting is required, the meeting shall be held in accordance with Iowa Code section 21.4 or 21.8.

*e.* Persons wishing to appear before the state board shall submit the request to the state board office not less than ten days prior to the meeting. Presentations may be made at the discretion of the chairperson and only upon matters appearing on the agenda. Persons wishing to submit written material should do so at least ten days in advance of the scheduled meeting to ensure that state board members have adequate time to receive and evaluate the material.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3, 237.16, and 237.18.

#### **489—1.3(237) Leadership.**

**1.3(1)** The director ensures adequate leadership, oversight of programs, and ongoing administration of the state board’s activities and of the court appointed special advocate program. The director employs, discharges, trains, and supervises foster care review and court appointed special advocate program employees.

**1.3(2)** The department will:

*a.* Administer funds necessary for operations of foster care reviews and the court appointed special advocate program.

*b.* Develop and implement policies and procedures needed to implement requirements of federal law and regulations and state law and administrative rules.

*c.* Develop and recommend administrative rules for promulgation by the state board as needed to govern the operation of the state board, foster care reviews, and the court appointed special advocate program.

*d.* Ensure training is provided for state board members, court appointed special advocates and coaches, and any other volunteers supporting the state board’s programs.

*e.* Ensure that relationships are developed and maintained with judges, juvenile court referees, local departments, juvenile court services, and advocacy groups.

*f.* Coordinate efforts to ensure community awareness of the state board and the court appointed special advocate program.

*g.* Work closely with allied agencies and associations to ensure that efforts relating to the state board and the court appointed special advocate program are coordinated and consistent.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.18(5).

**489—1.4(237) Foster care registry.**

**1.4(1) Placement.** The state board shall establish a registry of the placements of all children receiving foster care as set forth in Iowa Code section 237.17.

This subrule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.17.

**1.4(2) Confidentiality of records.** The state board, court appointed special advocates and coaches, and child advocacy employees shall adhere to the confidentiality requirements established in Iowa Code section 237.21.

This subrule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.21.

**489—1.5(237) Foster care review.** The state board is required by Iowa Code section 237.18 to establish procedures and protocols for completing reviews of the cases of children in foster care, including a recordkeeping system and training requirements for individuals completing reviews.

**1.5(1) Establishing procedures and protocols.**

*a.* The state board is responsible for approval of policy and procedures consistent with the Iowa Code.

*b.* The department establishes and submits to the state board for approval policy and procedures that provide detailed guidance to individuals reviewing the cases of children in foster care on application of these rules and the statutes that govern foster care reviews.

*c.* Individuals reviewing the cases of children in foster care under the oversight of the state board are required to comply with the protocols and procedures approved by the state board.

*d.* Implementation of policy and procedures is the responsibility of the department.

This subrule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.19.

**1.5(2) Findings and recommendations.** The department will submit the findings and recommendations of foster care reviews to the state board. The report to the state board will include information regarding the permanency plan and the progress in attaining the permanency goals.

This subrule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.19.

**489—1.6(237) Children eligible for review.** To be eligible for review, the child shall have received services from the department during the period under review.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.18.

**489—1.7(237) Court appointed special advocate program.** The state board is required by Iowa Code section 237.18 to establish procedures and protocols for administering the court appointed special advocate program.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.18.

**489—1.8(237) Program requirements.**

**1.8(1) Establishing additional procedures and protocols.**

*a.* The state board is responsible for approval of procedures and protocols consistent with the Iowa Code.

*b.* The department establishes and submits to the state board for approval a program policy and procedures manual that provides detailed guidance to department staff and volunteers on application of these rules and the statutes that govern the operation of the court appointed special advocate program.

*c.* Department staff and volunteers are required to comply with the protocols and procedures approved by the state board and the provisions of the policy and procedures manual established by the department and approved by the state board.

*d.* Implementation of program policy is the responsibility of the department.

*e.* The department is responsible for recruiting, screening, selecting, training, and supervising court appointed special advocates.

*f.* The CASA selection is made in a manner that provides the best match available between the knowledge, skills, abilities, and availability of the advocate and the needs of the child. The assignments shall be made in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest, risk to the child's or advocate's safety, or jeopardy to the program's integrity.

g. Upon selection of the CASA who will serve on an individual case, the court and all interested parties are notified of the selection.

h. The selected CASA continues to serve on the case until the assignment is terminated by the court.

**1.8(2)** Reserved.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.18.

**489—1.9(237) Adherence to national guidelines.** The National Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Association for Children has established a national quality assurance system for CASA programs. The primary goal of the system is to strengthen CASA organizations and support their efforts to provide high-quality child advocacy and achieve the maximum level of excellence. CASA of Iowa shall continue to maintain compliance with the standards and, within the limits of available funding, shall deploy resources to maintain compliance in the future.

**1.9(1)** *CASA advocate qualifications.* Potential coaches and advocates shall meet the qualifications defined by the National CASA Association for Children Standards as amended to August 1, 2026.

**1.9(2)** *Application requirements for CASA volunteers.* All CASA volunteer applicants shall complete the requirements defined in the National CASA Association for Children Standards as amended to August 1, 2026.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.18.

**489—1.10(237) Training.** All court appointed special advocates, volunteers, and staff shall complete pre-service and continuing education requirements as defined in the National CASA Association for Children Standards as amended to August 1, 2026.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.18.

**489—1.11(237) Children eligible for assignment of a court appointed special advocate.** CASA of Iowa serves any child for whom the court appoints a court appointed special advocate as long as the resources to do so are available.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.18.