

# Role of the GAL

A Guardian Ad Litem shall advocate for a child's best interests.

An order appointing a CASA imposes on the CASA all of the duties, rights and responsibilities of a GAL.

**Unless a child's circumstances render the following duties and responsibilities unreasonable, a guardian ad litem shall at a minimum:**

Maintain regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child and, in a manner appropriate to his or her developmental level, meet with and interview such child prior to custody hearings, adjudication hearings, disposition hearings, judicial reviews, and any other hearings scheduled in accordance with the provisions of this chapter;

In a manner appropriate to such child's developmental level, ascertain such child's needs, circumstances, and views;

Conduct an independent assessment to determine the facts and circumstances surrounding the case;

Consult with the child's attorney, if appointed separately, regarding the issues in the proceeding;

Communicate with health care, mental health care, and other professionals involved with such child's case;

Review case study and educational, medical, psychological, and other relevant reports relating to such child and the respondents;

Review all court related documents;

Attend all court hearings and other proceedings to advocate for such child's best interests;

Advocate for timely court hearings to obtain permanency for such child;

Protect the cultural needs of such child;

Contact the child prior to any proposed change in such child's placement;

Contact the child after changes in such child's placement;

Request a judicial citizen review panel or judicial review of the case;

Attend citizen panel review hearings concerning such child and if unable to attend the hearings, forward to the panel a letter setting forth such child's status during the period since the last citizen panel review and include an assessment of the DFCS permanency and treatment plans;

Provide written reports to the court and the parties on the child's best interests, including, but not limited to, recommendations regarding placement of such child, updates on such child's adjustment to placement, DFCS's and respondent's compliance with prior court orders and treatment plans, such child's degree of participation during visitations, and any other recommendations based on the best interests of the child;

When appropriate, encourage settlement and the use of any alternative forms of dispute resolution and participate in such processes to the extent permitted; and

Monitor compliance with the case plan and all court orders.