



## Guidelines for GAL Practice

A GAL shall seek to determine and advocate for what is in the best interests of his/her ward.

A GAL shall investigate a case in order to prepare for hearings.

A GAL shall fully litigate a case.

A GAL shall actively participate in disposition.

A GAL shall actively assist in post dispositional matters.

A GAL shall be compensated for his/her services rendered.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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An Independent Project of the  
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## Guardian ad Litem Project Mission Statement

To promote proficient and skillful representation of the interests of children and others before the juvenile court: To vindicate their rights, and achieve their best interests as valued members of our community.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM  
(GAL)

FOR

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Attorney Name

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Address

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Phone Number

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Email Address



## What Is a Guardian Ad Litem?

A Guardian ad Litem (GAL) in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court is an attorney appointed by the Juvenile Court to advocate for the best interests of a child (and sometimes an adult).

In the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, every GAL receives in depth juvenile law training and training on the needs of the children in the court system. A GAL receives training through the GAL Project, a program of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association.

## When Is a GAL Appointed?

A GAL is appointed by the court to advocate for the best interests of a child involved in abuse, neglect, dependency, permanent custody and temporary and permanent surrender cases. A GAL will also be appointed for a child in a delinquency, unruly, or custody case when:

1. The child has no parent, guardian or legal custodian;
2. There may be a conflict of interest between the child and the parents;

A GAL will be appointed for a parent when the parent may have difficulty understanding the Juvenile Court proceedings for some reason or when the parent is under the age of 18.

## What Does a GAL Do?

A GAL does what is necessary to protect the best interests of the child, including:

1. Investigating: A GAL is entitled to all information relating to his/her ward;
2. Mediating: A GAL will discuss issues with all parties to reach resolutions in the child's best interests;
3. Monitoring court proceedings;
4. Monitoring services provided to the child by CCDCFS or a private child placing agency that has temporary or permanent custody of the child;
5. Filing motions or other court papers, and presenting evidence in court to advocate on behalf of the child's best interests.

## When to Call the GAL

1. When the child's progress at school or home has changed;
2. When you receive notice of a court hearing;
3. When you or the child has a new address or phone number.
4. When the child has a social, mental health, or medical need that is not being addressed; or

5. When any issue arises with the child, the parent, or the caregiver.

## What to Expect from a GAL

1. The GAL will communicate with you regarding the child's needs and your efforts to meet those needs.
2. The GAL may also communicate with teachers, counselors, therapists, doctors and anyone else who has relevant information.
3. The GAL will listen to your concerns.
4. If you are a person who wants custody or visitation, the GAL will confer with you about the child.
5. The GAL will make reports concerning the child to the Court.

