

Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Role, Duties and Qualifications **In Child of Need Cases (CINA Rule 11)**

Role of the GAL

A guardian ad litem (GAL) is a person appointed by the court to act as an independent representative and advocate for a child's best interests in a child protection proceeding. The GAL determines and advocates for the best interests of the child given the child's situation, taking into account the child's age, maturity, culture and ethnicity, and public laws and policies regarding family preservation and timely permanency planning. GAL services are provided through the Office of Public Advocacy.

Duties of the GAL

- Conduct ongoing independent investigations
- Identify potential placement options
- Advocate for early tribal identification and paternity determinations
- Consult professionals as necessary
- Participate in case planning
- Monitor provision and utilization of family support services
- Determine whether to seek GAL or attorney appointment in related proceedings
- Monitor other community services provided to child, including education
- Seek cooperative solutions to child's situation, as appropriate
- Explain court proceedings to child and encourage child's participation, as appropriate
- Determine whether and under what circumstances child should testify
- Appear and participate at all court hearings
- Provide timely written reports to court
- Request specific court orders for services to child and family
- Take action when services are not being provided to or utilized by child and family
- Take action when informed of violations or orders, new developments, or material changes in child's circumstances
- Advise court promptly if appointment of counsel for child should be considered

CASA Volunteers

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a community volunteer trained by the Office of Public Advocacy to advocate, under the supervision of a staff GAL, for abused and neglected children involved in CINA proceedings. There are CASA Programs in Anchorage, Mat-Su Valley, Juneau and Fairbanks.