

Super Saturday



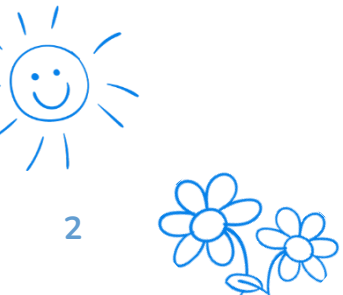
Kids' Voice of Indiana

Advocate. Educate. Protect.



GAL/CASA

- Agenda
 - What is a GAL/CASA?
 - What is Best Interest?
 - How does a lawyer help advocate?



GAL/CASA ROLE

Role of a CASA

“TO REPRESENT AND PROTECT THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD”.

ADVOCACY



CASA DEFINITION

IC 31-9-2-28 "Court appointed special advocate"

Sec. 28. [b] "Court appointed special advocate", for purposes of IC 31-32-3-10.5, IC 31-33, IC 31-34, IC 31-35, and IC 31-37, means a **community volunteer** who:

(1) has completed a training program approved by the court that includes training in:

(A) the identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect; and

(B) early childhood, child, and adolescent development;

as required by 42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(xiii);

(2) has been appointed by a court to represent and protect the best interests of a child; and

(3) may research, examine, advocate, facilitate, and monitor a child's situation.



What does “Best Interests” mean?

- No specific definition
- Case-by-case determination (fact specific to each child)
 - Placement
 - In-Home, Relative Care (RC), Kinship Care, Foster Care (FC), Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC), Residential, Emergency Shelter Care (ESC)
 - Parenting-Time
 - Unsupervised, Supervised, Therapeutically Supervised
 - Permanency Plan
 - Work toward this goal to hopefully close the case
 - Reunification, Adoption, Guardianship, Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)



Best Interest – Factors

- Best interest factors:
 - Child's age and sex
 - Wishes of parents
 - Wishes of child, with more consideration given if child is at least 14 years old
 - Interaction and interrelationship of child with parents, siblings, and other who may significantly affect child's best interests – i.e. bond
 - Child's adjustment to home, school, and community
 - Mental and physical health of all persons involved – special needs?
 - Participation, compliance, and benefits with court ordered services and orders



Best Interest – Guiding Principles

- Guiding Principles:
 - It is in a child's best interests to remain with their family of origin when safely possible.
 - It is in a child's best interest to be reunified with their family of origin as soon as safely possible.
 - Strengthening families, through recommendations for services, supports, visitation, and communications, is in the child's best interests to achieve stability and/or reunification.



Legal

- 10 lawyers supporting 35 full-time GALs
- Support GAL/CASA
 - Filing motions
 - Appearing at trial
 - Making written recommendations
 - Guardianships



Questions ?

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