



# Guardianship

*A social story to help explain the  
guardianship process*

# How to Use a Social Story

Social stories are visual ways to help explain complex processes and ideas to children and to people who benefit from concrete, visual explanations. The social stories can be modified to fit any situation.

## *Tips for using the social story:*

Introduce the story early to help prepare the person for what is going to happen.

If possible, modify the story to fit the needs of the individual. Including specific people or places may be helpful.

Read the social story to the person several times, on several occasions before the event in order to allow the person time to become familiar and process the information.

*This social story is for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice.*

*Created May 2017*



A guardian is a person who is responsible  
for making sure I am cared for.

A guardian is a family member or a friend  
appointed by a judge.



The guardian must take care of me and  
keep me safe.

If someone wants to become my guardian, they file a document with the court asking for permission to be my guardian.



The court will set a hearing to decide who should be my guardian.

Before the hearing, a guardian *ad litem* may visit me in my home and ask me questions.



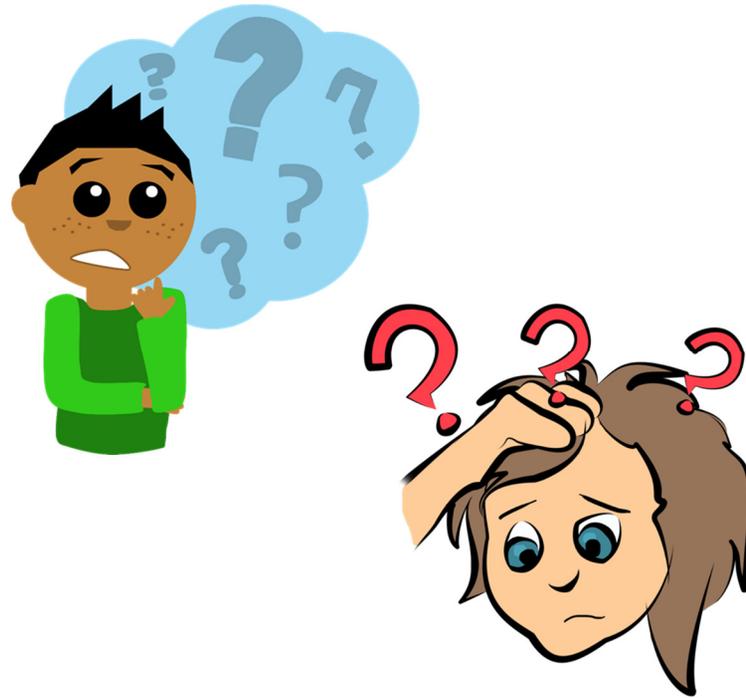
The guardian *ad litem* represents my interests. I should tell the truth and answer all of his or her questions.

The guardianship hearing will be held in a courtroom with a judge and attorneys present. The person who wants to be my guardian will also be there. My parents or other family members might be present.



At the hearing, the guardian *ad litem* will testify about what he or she saw in my home and what I told them. If my parents are there, they may testify at the hearing. Friends and family can also testify at the hearing.

Sometimes, the hearings are hard on family members. The attorneys may say things that I don't understand.



It is important for me to remember that everyone is there to make sure I am safe, happy, and healthy.

The judge will make a decision about who should be my guardian.



If the judge thinks someone other than my parents should be my guardian, I will live with the guardian and not my parents.

Even if the judge says someone other than my parent is my guardian, my parent does not lose their right to talk to me or be my parent.



After the guardianship hearing,  
the guardian *ad litem* may visit me  
again in my home.



The judge, guardian *ad litem*,  
my guardian, my parents and my family  
are all working to keep me  
healthy, happy and safe.



Materials available online at  
[www.indianadisabilityrights.org](http://www.indianadisabilityrights.org)