A Guardian Ad Litem Litem, or "GAL", has been appointed to represent the best interests of your child/ren.

"Ad Litem" literally means "for the lawsuit".

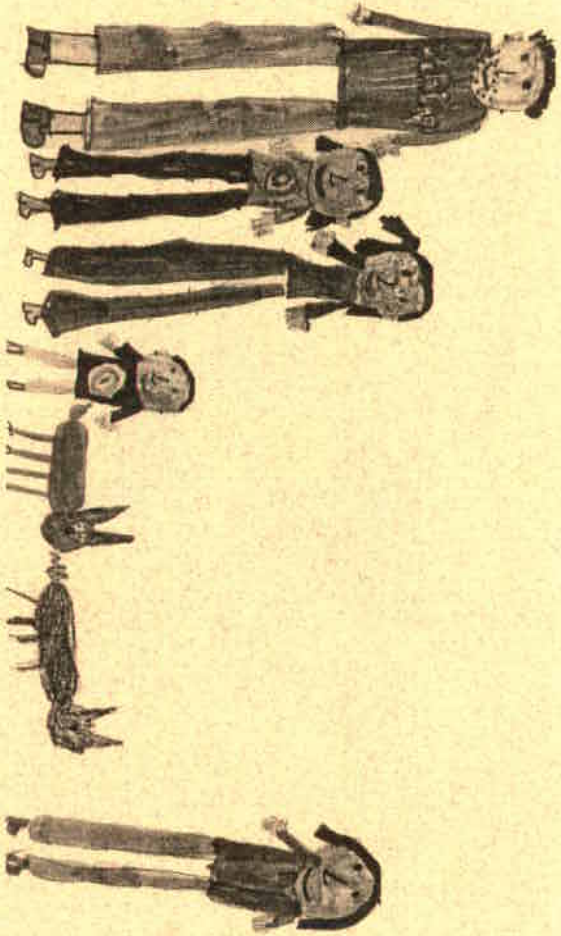
One of the GAL's functions is to act only on behalf of the child/ren independent of the positions taken by either parent or party.

The GAL will generally be involved to help settle any issues related to custody or parenting time.

Sometimes the Court will appoint a GAL for a specific purpose. This purpose should be listed specifically in the Order you received.

Depending on the financial resources of the parties, the Judicial Officer assigned to the case will determine who pays for the GAL's services.

To facilitate the GAL process, please cooperate with the gathering of information as quickly as possible.



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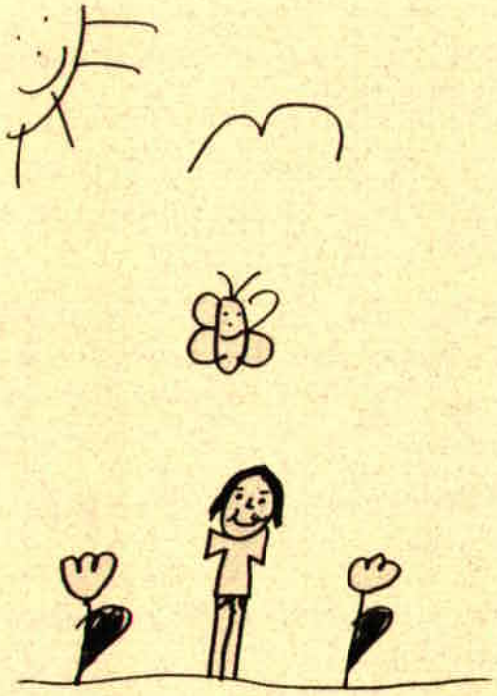
GAL Program
1/2002

HENNEPIN COUNTY FAMILY COURT



GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM

Family Court
Guardian ad Litem Program L893
Family Justice Center
Suite 600
110 South Fourth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2279
(612)596-7530 FAX (612) 596-9317

A Guardian Ad Litem Will:

1. Advocate for child/ren's best interests in every case.
2. Be knowledgeable about child development, parenting issues and community resources.
3. Make timely home visits if ordered by the Court.
4. Talk to persons they feel are care-givers or significant people in the child/ren's life.
5. Make independent recommendations (oral/written) about custody and parenting time issues.
6. Communicate timely with all parties.
7. Set up parenting time process per court order.
8. Monitor progress of parenting plan or services.
9. Follow the limitations made by the Court with respect to their involvement.
10. Be respectful of the child/ren's heritage.
11. Maintain confidentiality as appropriate.

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A Guardian Ad Litem Can't:

1. Pick up, drop off, supervise, or otherwise provide any 'direct' services. They are to help set up the process.
2. Act as child/ren's protection workers and cannot respond to situations immediately. Please call 911 if you feel there are any incidents that require immediate attention.
3. Act as the child/ren's lawyer.
4. Give legal advice although many of them may be lawyers.
5. Force parties to comply with a Court order.

"See Minn. Stat. § 518.165 & Minnesota Rules of GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROCEDURE for further information."