

GAL CODE OF CONDUCT

In addition to the responsibilities listed on the previous pages, it is important that you are familiar with the GAL Code of Conduct which defines the conduct expectations and requirements of a Guardian ad Litem. You will be asked to sign a copy of this document at the end of training indicating that you understand and are willing to abide by this code of conduct.

The Guardian ad Litem shall:

- (1) maintain high standards of conduct in carrying out his or her duties and obligations;
- (2) diligently represent and be guided solely by the best interests of the child;
- (3) report honestly and impartially to the court on what is in the best interest of the child;
- (4) respect the privacy of the child and the family;
- (5) hold confidential all information obtained in the course of service as a guardian ad litem, as required by law and these Standards;
- (6) decline appointment, withdraw, or request assistance when the volunteer recognizes that he or she may not have the time or ability to effectively advocate for a child;
- (7) affirmatively advise the Program if he or she is charged with or convicted of a criminal offense, or becomes involved in any other court proceeding, as this may cause a conflict of interest or adversely affect the GAL's ability to effectively advocate for a child;
- (8) report any new incident of child abuse or neglect to his or her supervisor and the abuse hotline;
- (9) comply with local circuit Program policies;
- (10) notify the Program Director if the guardian ad litem or any member of the GAL's immediate family becomes involved in a case with allegations of child abuse or neglect;
- (11) discuss all recommendations concerning the case with Program staff prior to submitting recommendations to the court;
- (12) obtain approval from Program staff before submitting any document to the court or other parties;
- (13) monitor the child regularly, including visiting the child every 30 days at a minimum; unless that visitation standard is specifically waived on a case- by-case basis by the Circuit Director.
- (14) return identification cards and all case files and related materials to the Program office upon discharge from the case or dismissal from the Program;
- (15) discuss case progress and guardian ad litem activity at least every thirty (30) days with Program staff and regularly submit case activity sheets;
- (16) complete twelve hours of in-service training annually.

Guardian ad Litem staff and volunteers shall not take action which:

- (17) endangers the child, a party, a witness or other person
- (18) is outside the powers or role of the guardian ad litem;
- (19) violates state or local law, court rule, Program policy or court or Program procedure;
- (20) contravenes staff or court direction;
- (21) repeatedly or significantly fails to perform a responsibility as a GAL;
- (22) falsifies or fails to disclose information on the guardian ad litem application form, misrepresents facts during the screening interview or commits an act which results in a substantial alteration of the individual's qualifications to serve in the GAL Program;

- (23) violates the GAL Code of Conduct or the Standards of Operation;
- (24) transports a child or a family member of a child represented by the Program;
- (25) engages in conduct that is inappropriate or not in the best interests of the child or the GAL Program;
- (26) engages in an intimate, social, or other nonprofessional relationship with any person connected to the case or be employed in a position that might result in a conflict of interest;
- (27) practices, condones, facilitates, or participates in any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or status;
- (28) includes carrying a weapon or firearm during the performance of any duties and/or responsibilities as a GAL, notwithstanding that the individual may possess a valid license to carry a concealed weapon or firearm, pursuant to section 790.06, Florida statutes;**
- (29) accepts a fee for services as a guardian ad litem appointed through the GAL Program;
- (30) allows any child or family member of a child represented by the Program into their home;
- (31) gives therapeutic counseling;
- (32) gives legal advice or otherwise practice law in their capacity as a guardian ad litem, unless the guardian ad litem is an attorney;
- (33) misrepresents the role or position of the guardian ad litem; or
- (34) engages in any ex parte communication with a judge.

Failure to comply with Code may result in disciplinary action or discharge from Program.

 Volunteer Guardian ad Litem
(Please print or type full name)

 Date

 Volunteer Guardian ad Litem
(Signature)

 Deborah Moore
Circuit Director