

Every Child Deserves the Highest Quality of Advocacy in Florida's Dependency Courts



Help make sure that they get it. ❤️

☀️ Make Sure Every Child has a GAL

Starting July 1, 2024, the court must appoint a Guardian ad Litem for every child.¹

- **What can you do if a child doesn't have a GAL?**

Contact your local GAL office to advise them of children who do not have a GAL. Advise the court that the child does not have a GAL.

☀️ Make Sure Every Child Entitled to an Appointed Attorney Has One

If a child meets at least one these criteria, the court must appoint an attorney ad litem for them:²

- Live in, or are being considered for placement in, a **nursing home**.
- Are prescribed a **psychotropic medication** and either don't want to take it or are too young to agree.
- Have a diagnosis of **developmental disability**.
- Are in, being considered for placement in a **residential treatment center** (SIPP, therapeutic group home, QRTP, BQRTP)³
- Are **victims of human trafficking**.

The law requires DCF to request that the court appoint an attorney for children who meet the criteria.⁴

- **What can you do if a child who should have an attorney doesn't have one?**

1. If you are in court, and are able to address the judge, you can point out that the child is eligible but doesn't have an attorney ad litem.
2. Contact the DCF-Children's Legal Services Managing Attorney for your region and provide them with the information about the child so they can determine whether they are required to move for appointment of an attorney. (See the back for more information)



Definitions of Guardian ad Litem and Attorney ad Litem

Guardian ad Litem: Fla. Stat §39.01(32) means a person or an entity that is a fiduciary appointed by the court to represent a child in any civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding to which the child is a party, including, but not limited to, under this chapter, which uses a best interest standard for decisionmaking and advocacy.

Attorney ad Litem: Fla. Stat §39.01 (8) an attorney appointed by the court to represent a child in a dependency case who has an attorney-client relationship with the child under the rules regulating The Florida Bar.

1 Fla. Stat. §39.013(11). Previously the court had discretion to not appoint a GAL.

2 Fla. Stat. §39.01305(3). The term child's attorney or attorney for the child means the same thing.

3 SIPP = Statewide Inpatient Psychiatric Program, QRTP= Qualified Residential Treatment Program, BQRTP =Behavioral Qualified Residential Treatment Program,

4 Fla. Stat. §39.01305(6)

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Information to Provide to DCF Managing Attorney

If you don't have the child's name provide as much information as you can

Child's Name, approximate age, why you think the child is eligible, Judge's name or judicial division, DCF-CLS attorney, Parent's name, Parent's counsel, Date and Time of the hearing.

Example: I was in Judge Judy's courtroom in Riverside County on Wednesday, May 1st at 10 am when I heard a young teen named Tommy saying that he really does not want to take his ADHD medication. He did not seem to have a lawyer. I don't know his last name, but his case was the third one on the docket.



Department of Children & Families Children's Legal Services Managing Attorneys

REGION	CIRCUIT	CLS ATTORNEY	OFFICE #	E-MAIL
Northwest	1	Vacant	850.483.6689	Rebecca.Krinsky@myflfamilies.com (contact RD Rebecca Krinsky)
Northwest	2	Nicholas Dolce	850.329.9223	Nicholas.Dolce@MyFLFamilies.com
Northwest	14	Michael Sasser	850.691.4042	Michael.Sasser@MyFLFamilies.com
Northwest	3	ShannonJo Converse	386.243.6102	ShannonJo.Converse@MyFLFamilies.com
Northwest	4	Stephanie Barilla	904.380.2139	Stephanie.Barilla@MyFLFamilies.com
Northwest	7	Nicole Henry	386.481.9415	Andrea.Kerr@MyFLFamilies.com
Northwest	8	Nicholas Hamm	352.415.6185	Nicholas.Hamm@MyFLFamilies.com
Central	5	Vacant	407.317.7081	Maxine.Henry@myflfamilies.com (contact RD Maxine Henry)
Central	9	Barbara Dirienzo	407.317.7068	Barbara.Dirienzo@MyFLFamilies.com
Central	10	Jared Monahan	863.860.9411	Jared.Monahan@MyFLFamilies.com
Central	18	Angela Sturm	321.674.1886	Angela.Sturm@MyFLFamilies.com
Suncoast	6	Karen Hill	727.453.7059	Karen.Hill@MyFLFamilies.com
Suncoast	12	David Silverstein	941.554.1753	David.Silverstein@MyFLFamilies.com
Suncoast	13	Ashley Cannon	813.496.2439	Ashley.Cannon@MyFLFamilies.com
Suncoast	20	Jennifer Bohanon	239.895.0166	Jennifer.Bohanon@MyFLFamilies.com
Southeast	15	Joshua Smith	561.227.6700	Joshua.Smith@MyFLFamilies.com
Southeast	17	Gina Leiser	954.308.2941	Gina.Leiser@MyFLFamilies.com
Southeast	19	Pilar Harris	772.595.1357	Pilar.Harris@MyFLFamilies.com
Southern	11 & 16	Katherine Zubizarreta	786.257.5053	Katherine.Zubizarreta@MyFLFamilies.com

Help Us Track Compliance

Every time you notify a DCF-CLS attorney about a child who might be entitled to an attorney, please fill out this [form](#).