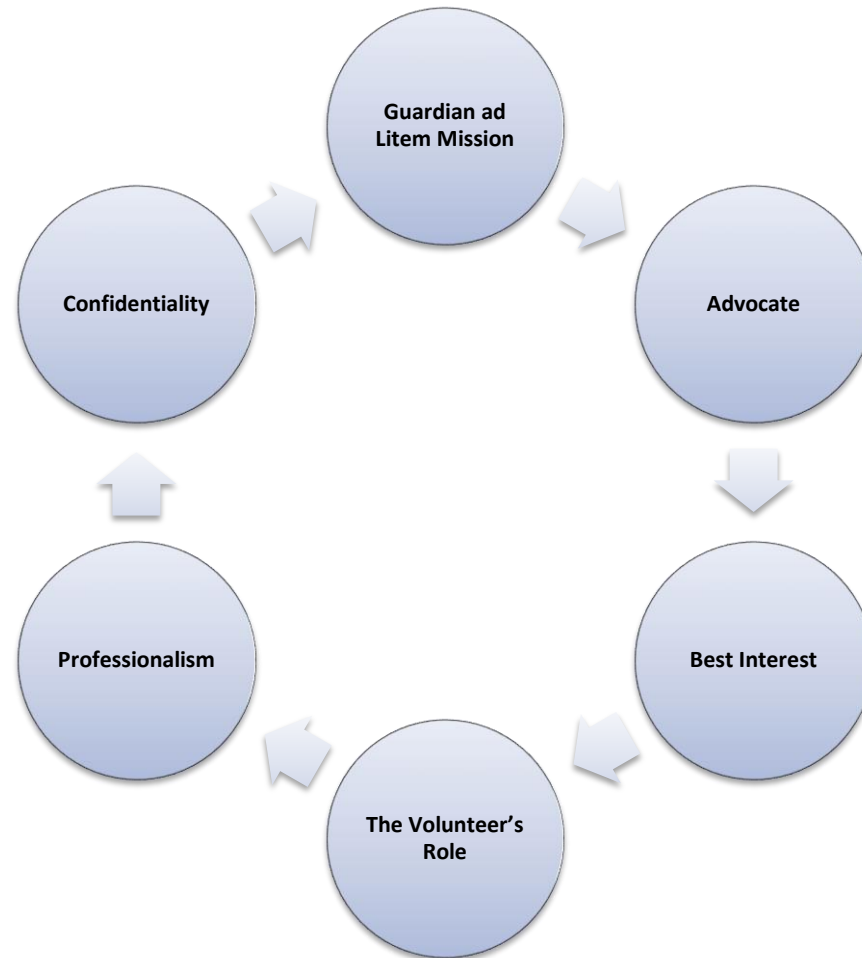




First Judicial Circuit
Guardian ad Litem Program

**The Road to
Child
Advocacy**

Let's Begin the Journey



Our Mission
(Ten Words You Should Never Forget)

Advocating
for the Child's
Best Interest
is Our Only
Interest

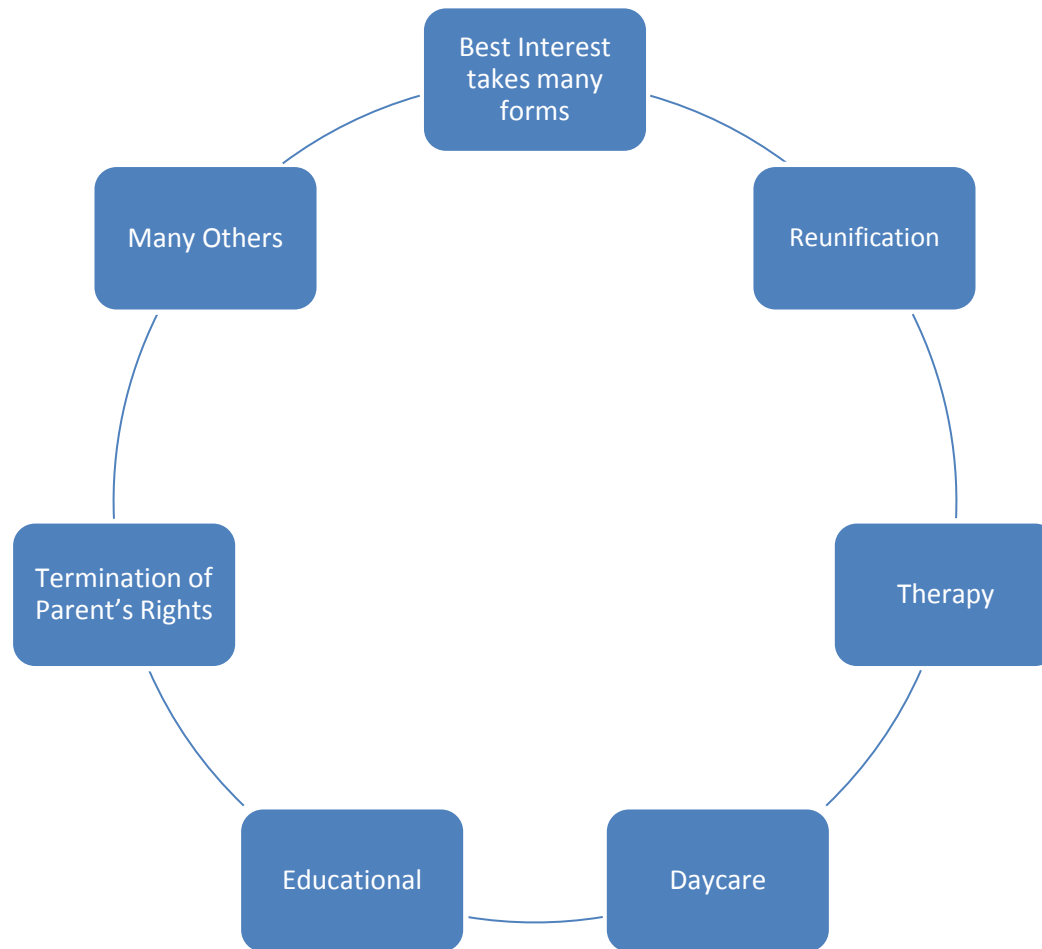
What is an Advocate?

Dictionary.Com says:

“A person who pleads the cause of another in a court of law”

Simplest Terms – A Voice for the Child

What is Best Interest?



The Volunteer's Role

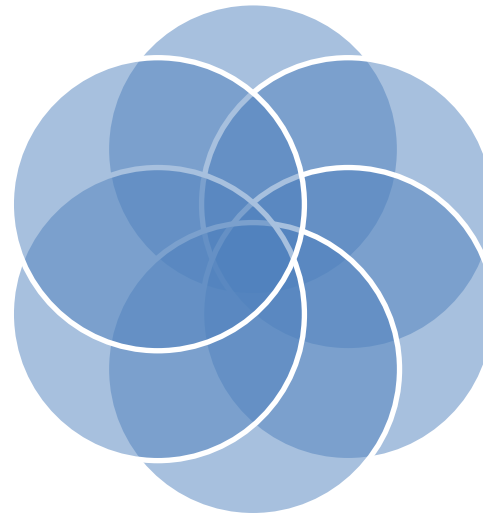
The Eyes and Ears
of the Guardian ad
Litem Program and
the Court

Professional
observer

Friend to the Child

Voice of Best
Interest

Advocate for the
Child



Voice of the Child

Professionalism

BusinessDictionary.Com Says: “meticulous adherence to undeviating courtesy, honesty, and responsibility in one’s dealings with customers and associates...”

Qualities of a Professional

Trustworthy, Competent, Respectful

Professionals We Work With

- Judges, Magistrates, Attorneys
- Child Protective Investigators
- Family Services Counselors
- Doctors, Nurses, Therapists
- Teachers, Guidance Counselors
- Foster Parents
- Guardian ad Litem Volunteers

BLACK BOX WARNING

Danger Will Robinson, Danger!

Guardian ad Litem Volunteers should never have conversations regarding their case with Judges, Magistrates, DCF attorneys, or parent's attorneys without the GAL attorney present

Professionalism in Court

Dress conservatively and appropriately

All parties are addressed by their titles: Judge or Your Honor, Magistrate, Mr./Mrs./Ms. and last name

Always coordinate information with your Child Advocacy Manager and the GAL Attorney before the hearing

Never blurt out information – the GAL attorney will determine what should be said and will have you recognized by the Court

BLACK BOX WARNING

Danger Will Robinson, Danger!

Please do not interact with incarcerated parents in the courtroom without the approval of court /prisoner security. Do not give anything to an incarcerated parent or touch them in any way.

A Recipe for Professional GAL Volunteers

Take one dedicated individual

Mix with a heaping helping of concern for children

Combine with observable, quantifiable facts

Add a dash of confidentiality

Stir frequently with your Child Advocacy Manager

Voila! One professional GAL volunteer!

Shhh! It's Confidential

- Dictionary.Com says “...limited to persons authorized to use the information, documents, etc.”
- Order of Appointment + Notice of Acceptance = Authority to Obtain Needed Information
- All case information is treated as “confidential”
- All case information gathered comes directly to the Child Advocacy Manager

It's Still Confidential

Share with Legal Parties to the Case?

Court - Attorneys – Family Service Counselors – Child Protective Investigators – GAL - Parents

But what about Grandma and Grandpa?

But the teacher needs to know...

Walking the Line of Confidentiality

- Obtaining Information vs. Providing Information
- Examples: School – Child Protection Team – Relatives
- Parent Information?
- OAP vs. Release of Information
- Not sure? Call your Child Advocacy Manager

The Whole Enchilada (or what we talked about today)



Mission - Those 10 Words
Advocacy
Best Interest
The Volunteer's Role
Professionalism
Confidentiality
The Journey Continues...