

COURT OBSERVATION GUIDE

As a GAL volunteer, you will be expected to appear in court as part of your work on the case. You will be given the opportunity to provide best interest testimony as the “voice for the child.” A Child Best Interest (CBI) Attorney will always be present with you in court. You will work together as a team to make sure that the Court addresses all of your recommendations and concerns and takes action that moves the case forward toward permanency for the child.

Courtroom Etiquette

- Always dress and act in a professional manner
- Turn off your cell phone
- Do not chew gum or bring any food items into the courtroom
- When the case is announced and it is stated that “we are on the record,” you should refrain from talking
- Be aware of your body language. Remember we communicate more through non-verbal communication than verbal.

What to Observe

- Who attends and participates in the hearing as a “party” to the case
- What is the type of hearing(s) you are observing?
- The testimony of the GAL. What are they recommending?
- Any type of protocol followed as to how testimony is presented
- Other than the “parties” to the case, were there any other persons providing testimony?
- Did the judge issue any orders? What did they pertain to?

Be prepared to discuss with your CAC/Mentor each of the items you were asked to observe as well as any questions you have about the court proceedings.