



CIRCUIT COURT OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
FAMILY COURT DIVISION
625 EAST 26TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64108-2719

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Issued by: Director of Office of the Guardian ad Litem – Family Court

Topic: **Policy No. 1030-09 -- GAL Standard 9 – Relating the Court Process to the Child**

Effective Date: July 7, 2015

New:

Revised:

Rescinds:

Reviewed: X

POLICY:

The Office of the Guardian ad Litem (OGAL) shall explain the court process and the role of the Guardian ad Litem to the child. When appropriate and based on the child's age and abilities, OGAL shall inform the child of the purpose of each court proceeding, the applicable laws, the role of counsel, therapists, social worker, and other relevant individuals.

PROCEDURES:

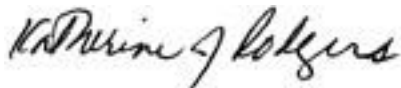
1. The assigned Guardian ad Litem (GAL) attorney or non-attorney staff shall meet with the child to determine the child's age, education level, developmental level, cultural background, and language acquisition. The first preference is that someone from the assigned courtroom team (see Policy 1030-22) will be the person meeting with the children.
 - a. The assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff shall consider the above factors when communicating with the child.
 - b. The assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff, at the direction of the assigned GAL attorney, will explain to the child the proceedings, placement options and services. The assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff will explain what to expect before, during and after each hearing.
 - c. The assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff, at the direction of the assigned GAL attorney, will explain to the child what the role of the guardian ad litem is and that the assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff, at the direction of the assigned GAL attorney, will advocate for the child's best interest.

Policy No. 1030-09 – GAL Standard - Relating the Court Process to the Child

- d. The assigned GAL attorney will assure the child that the Court is made aware of the child’s wishes, especially if those wishes conflict with OGAL’s recommendation. If OGAL’s recommendation is different than the child’s wishes, the assigned GAL attorney shall explain the reasons for the difference.
- e. When appropriate, the assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff, at the direction of the assigned GAL attorney, will ask the children if they are in need of any services that they are not receiving.
- f. The assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff will encourage older youth to attend hearings, when appropriate and shall provide the youth with information about their rights, services and permanency options.
- g. The assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff, at the direction of the assigned GAL attorney, shall explain to the older youth the advantages of remaining under court jurisdiction until age twenty-one (21) instead of being released at age eighteen (18).

REVISIONS: The proponent for this policy is the Director of the Office of Guardian ad Litem. If you have recommended changes or want to report errors, send your suggestions to the Director of Guardian ad Litem, Family Justice Center, 625 East 26th Street, Kansas City, MO 64108.

REVIEW DATE: May 1, 2023



May 1, 2021

Kathy J. Rodgers
Director of Office of the Guardian ad Litem-Family Court

Date

APPLICABLE STANDARDS:
None

CC: Deputy Court Administrator – Family Court Division