



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

**POLICY & PROCEDURE**

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

Topic: **Policy No. 1030-13 -- GAL Standard 13 – Recommendations to the Court**

Effective Date: July 7, 2015

New:

Revised: June 1, 2018

Rescinds:

Reviewed:

POLICY:

The Office of the Guardian ad Litem (OGAL) shall make recommendations to the court on the basis of evidence presented and consistent with the best interests of the child. The assigned Guardian ad Litem (GAL) attorney must inform the court of the child's wishes and preferences even though different from the GAL's recommendation.

PROCEDURES:

1. The assigned GAL attorney and non-attorney staff will meet with the child to ascertain the wishes and desires of the child. The assigned GAL attorney shall consider the child's age and ability to communicate when determining the child's wishes.
2. When making a recommendation to the court, OGAL shall inform the court of the child's wishes and desires even if they differ from OGAL's recommendations.
3. If assigned GAL attorney determines that there is such a conflict advocating for OGAL's recommendation for best interest and the child's preferences, OGAL will continue to make recommendations for best interest, but may request that the child be appointed an attorney to represent their preferences.
4. The assigned GAL attorney shall make recommendations regarding placement. In making such recommendations, the assigned GAL attorney shall consider the importance of children being with their siblings and maintaining family connections. This includes a connection with siblings who may live with a different parent or who have been adopted

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and are no longer under the court's jurisdiction. The assigned GAL attorney staff shall request home studies on and contact information for relatives and kinship providers when appropriate.

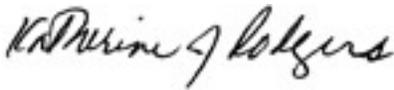
5. The assigned GAL attorney staff shall make recommendations regarding visitation between children and their parents. When making recommendations about visitation, the assigned GAL attorney shall consider the importance of establishing or maintaining a bond between children and their parents as well as safety of the children and the physical and emotional well-being of the children.
6. The assigned GAL attorney shall make recommendations regarding visitation between children and their siblings, if they are not placed together. When making recommendations about visitation, the assigned GAL attorney shall consider the importance of establishing or maintaining a bond between children and their siblings as well as safety of the children and the physical and emotional well-being of the children.
7. The assigned GAL attorney shall make recommendations for services in order to achieve reunification or other permanency for the children .
  - a. Services can include, but are not limited to, parent aides, visitation, therapy, (individual and/or family), substance abuse treatment, random urinalysis, hair tests, psychological evaluations and psychiatric evaluations. All services may not be necessary for each family.
  - b. The assigned GAL attorney shall recommend services that are only necessary for a specific family. The assigned GAL attorney shall guard against recommending unnecessary services that could overwhelm a family and/or slow down reunification or permanency.
8. When making recommendations to the court, the assigned GAL attorney shall consider reports from social services' workers, therapists, mentors, foster parents, mental health records, school reports, medical records and others with relevant information. The assigned GAL attorney or non-attorney staff, at the direction of the assigned GAL attorney, shall interview relevant service providers, the children and the caregivers of the children.
9. When making recommendations to the court, the assigned GAL attorney shall consider the evidence presented to determine if reunification is appropriate. Only when the assigned GAL attorney can reasonably be assured of the ongoing safety and well-being of the children will the assigned GAL attorney recommend reunification. The assigned GAL attorney will make recommendations regarding reunification as directed in Policy 1030-16.
10. When making recommendations to the court, the assigned GAL attorney shall consider the evidence presented to determine if a permanency goal other than reunification is appropriate. When making recommendations as to permanency the assigned GAL attorney shall keep in mind that every child is entitled to a safe and loving home.

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11. When making recommendations to the court, the assigned GAL attorney shall consider the evidence presented to determine if release of jurisdiction is appropriate. The assigned GAL attorney will make recommendations regarding release as directed in Policy 1030-17.

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 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Kansas City, MO 64108.

REVIEW DATE: July 1, 2019



June 1, 2018

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

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Date

APPLICABLE STANDARDS:

Juvenile Officer Performance Standard: 4.12; 4.13

CC: Deputy Court Administrator – Family Court Division