



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. 1030-16 -- Recommendation for Reunification**

Effective Date: July 7, 2015

New:

Revised:

Rescinds:

Reviewed: June 1, 2018

POLICY:

The Office of the Guardian ad Litem (OGAL) will recommend reunification of families when it is determined that the family has progressed to a point where the safety of the children can reasonably be assured.

Such recommendations for reunification shall take into consideration the following:

1. Participation in Services
 - a. Have all necessary services been put in place
 - b. Services can include, but are not limited to: individual therapy for children, individual therapy for parents or caregivers, family therapy, substance abuse treatment, random urinalysis, visitation (supervised and unsupervised), parent aid, parent education, psychological evaluations, medication, domestic violence counseling
2. Progress in Services
 - a. It should be noted that there can be participation in services without actual progress being made. To determine progress, the assigned Guardian ad Litem (GAL) attorney or non-attorney staff, at the direction of the assigned GAL attorney, shall review reports by providers and interview providers.
3. Completion of Service
 - a. what, if any, services will be necessary once the family is reunified
 - b. Will any service providers have to be changed once reunification occurs. If so, how long will it take to get those service in place
4. Safety – have all safety concerns been addressed
 - a. Perpetrators have participated and progressed in services
 - b. Dangerous physical conditions of the home have been rectified

Policy No. 1030-16 – Recommendation for Reunification

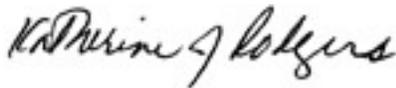
- c. Parent or caregiver had an understanding of how case originated and has taken responsibility
- d. Incidents of ongoing/recent domestic violence
- e. Ongoing or recent substance abuse
- f. Criminal and child abuse/neglect checks of household members
5. Stable, appropriate housing
 - a. ability to provide basic necessities including, but not limited to food, water, electricity, heat, clothes
6. Child/children's reaction to contact/visitation with parent/caregiver
 - a. Length, number and nature of the visits as reported by parent aid, child and therapist
7. Child's ability to protect self and/or report concerns to an appropriate adult
8. Parent/caregiver's mental health and cognitive ability
9. Child/children's mental health and cognitive ability
10. Parent/caregiver and child's cooperation with service providers and court process
11. Education opportunities for child/children
 - a. Will the child have to change schools at a difficult time (during the years as opposed to end of the semester)
 - b. Is there an IEP in place and can services be transferred
12. Original hotline allegation- have those conditions been rectified
13. Prior hotlines, prior time in out of home placements

When considering the above, the assigned GAL attorney shall examine reports from service providers and therapists, medical records, mental health records, and school records. 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.

Only when the assigned GAL attorney can reasonably be assured of the ongoing safety and well-being of the children will assigned GAL attorney recommend reunification.

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: July 1, 2019



June 1, 2018

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

Date

APPLICABLE STANDARDS:
None

Policy No. 1030-16 – Recommendation for Reunification

CC: Deputy Court Administrator – Family Court Division