

Some Rights of Youth with Colorado Dependency and Neglect Cases

Dependency and Neglect cases are often called D&N cases. They are court cases that try to help children and families. If you are a youth with a D&N case:

You have the right to be told when and where D&N hearings in your case will take place.

You have the right to have someone of your choosing attend the D&N hearings and many meetings in your case.

You have the right to a guardian *ad litem* or GAL, a lawyer who works for what is best for you. Your GAL's name is _____ . Your GAL's telephone number is _____ .

You have the right to a GAL who tells the court what you want to have happen in your case.

Your GAL has the right to:

- lots of information, in order to learn what is best for you;
- take part in all hearings, just like your parents and the State; and
- ask a higher court to check some things that happened in a lower court, to see if the lower court did the right thing.

During the early part of your D&N case, a court will decide if you are dependent or neglected, which basically means your family needs the State's help. This part is often called adjudication. During this part of your case:

- your GAL has the right to say that your case cannot be dismissed, meaning cancelled;
- your GAL has the right to a jury trial; and
- if plans called informal adjustments or deferred adjudications are talked about, you have the right to be told all your rights, and to agree or disagree with these plans.

If the court decides that you are dependent or neglected, the court will most likely hold a dispositional hearing, where the court will discuss a treatment plan for your family. You have the right to be involved in making the treatment plan.

Later in your D&N case, if you are not living with your parents, the court will have a permanency planning hearing, or PPH for short, where the court will discuss a plan for your future.

- Before the PPH, you have the right to be told when and where the PPH will occur, and you have the right to be told all your rights.
- You have the right to play a part in making your future plan.

If you are 12 or older, you cannot be adopted unless you agree to be adopted.

Please talk with your GAL about your comments and/or questions!

