

Requirements & Strategies of an Independent Investigation

1

Juvenile Delinquency (JD) Court

- When is a Guardian ad Litem appointed in a JD matter?
 - No parent or guardian present at hearing
 - Conflict of interest exists between child and parent
 - Family Member Victim case
 - GAL appointment necessary to serve the best interest of the child

2

Duties as GAL in JD Court per CJD

- Meet with child, explain my role as GAL
- Explain to child the difference between GAL and Defense Counsel
- Attend all court hearings
- Conduct an independent investigation and advocate for the best interest of the child.
 - 1) Personally meet child and/or observe
 - 2) Meet with placement provider, guardians, therapist, school, etc
 - 3) review court files, documents , relevant records
 - 4) If child in custody, visit child within 7 days

3

The Guided Reference In Dependency (GRID)

- The juvenile justice system holds public safety paramount and requires consideration of the best interests of the juvenile, the victim, and the community and the provision of appropriate treatment to reduce the recidivism rate and assist the juvenile in becoming a productive member of society.
- The GAL's duty of confidentiality to the best interests of the juvenile does not prevent a GAL from sharing information essential to representation of the child's best interests.
- The GAL must explain these limitations on confidentiality to the juvenile and ensure the juvenile understands the distinctions between the GAL's role and the role of defense counsel.
- Also, remember that in a JD matter, you as a GAL, are not a party to the case, but provide independent information, crucial to the court and other parties.

4

Advocating for Best Interest of Child


- In-home services
- Respite care
- School Intervention
- Placement of child out of the home
- Mental Health

5

Placement of a child

- Group homes
- Foster homes
- Kin/family homes
- Residential Facilities

6



Strategies to serve best interest of child

- Remain in contact with Public Defender, ADC, District Attorney, and caseworker
- Seek opinions of other professionals
- Talk to child
- Be creative and try a different approach
