



Understanding the Guardian ad Litem

In some custody cases, the court appoints a Guardian ad Litem, often called a GAL. A GAL is a neutral person, often an attorney, who investigates and represents the child's best interests. The GAL does not work for either parent.

How the process works

- 1 Appointment.** When custody is disputed, a judge may appoint a GAL at the request of a party or on the judge's own.
- 2 Why a GAL.** The court wants an independent view of what is best for the child, beyond what each parent presents.
- 3 Fees.** The GAL's fees are usually paid by the parties, as set out in the order appointing the GAL.
- 4 Investigation.** The GAL may interview the parties, the children, teachers, and others, visit each home, and review records.
- 5 Recommendations.** The GAL generally shares findings and recommendations with the court. The judge may weigh them but makes the final decision.

Working with the GAL

Be Cooperative. Respond promptly, keep appointments, and provide requested documents on time.

Be Honest. Share concerns truthfully and keep the focus on your child's needs.

Be Respectful. Speak about the other parent calmly, even when you disagree.

What to keep in mind

The GAL is not your advocate or the other parent's advocate.

Do not coach your children or discuss the case with them.

What you tell the GAL is generally not confidential and may be shared with the other party, their attorney, or the court.

Let us know before your meetings so we can help you prepare.

This guide provides general information about Guardians ad Litem in Georgia family law matters and is not legal advice about your specific case. Your attorney will explain how the GAL process applies to your situation.

YOUR ROLE

Pay your share of GAL fees on time, cooperate fully with the GAL's investigation, and let us know about any meetings or concerns so we can help you prepare.

QUESTIONS?

As always, all questions and requests should be directed to the team via email to team@pepitone.law.