



Guardian ad Litem



A Year is a Long Time In the Life of a Child.

Sen. Ben Albritton (SB 262) & Rep. Spencer Roach (HB 421)

Florida and federal law require that abused and neglected children either return home or have a permanent placement within one year. This is not happening in Florida in too many cases.

The GAL Program proposes improving communication and holding parties accountable for expediting cases to prevent children from languishing in the child welfare system:

- Establish greater accountability for parents by informing them throughout the case that if they are proactive partners, reunification can happen more quickly.
- Enhance communication by telling parents in plain language what is expected of them, that permanency should happen in under a year, to stay in contact with their attorney, and to report barriers to reunification.
- Establish greater accountability for DCF and the CBCs, requiring quick referrals and timely contact information, and planning strategies for parents to overcome barriers.
- Expedite cases by requiring that TPR orders be entered within 30 days of conclusion of the hearing and that continuances by the judge be limited.
- Require that if a child will not reach permanency within 60 days after a permanency hearing in which a goal of reunification or adoption is continued, a status hearing must be held every 60 days.

A year is a long time in life of a child, but with more communication and accountability we can improve outcomes and get children to permanent homes sooner.

The Florida Statewide
Guardian ad Litem Program

PO Box 10628
Tallahassee, FL 32302

Contact Alan Abramowitz
(850) 241.3232

www.GuardianadLitem.org