

Guardian ad Litem Checklist

1. Made sure my GAL continuing legal education credits are current?
2. Made sure court has signed my appointment order?
3. Met with each party, and his or her attorney?
4. Met with each child?
5. Did home visit at mother's home?
6. Did home visit at father's home?
7. Decided whether to request appointment of custody evaluator?
 - a. If yes, made motion for appointment?
 - b. Have list of experts to suggest?
8. Requested 2-5 letters of reference from people in support of each parent's claim for custody?
9. Received and reviewed reference letters?
10. Contacted the children's schools and/or daycares, teachers, babysitters, aides, etc.?
11. Investigated criminal background of each parent and significant others with whom the children may be living?
12. Have all hearing dates and trial dates scheduled on calendar?
13. Is there a deadline for me to make a recommendation to the court?
 - a. If so, what date?
 - b. If so, must it be in writing?
14. Thoroughly investigated any signs or allegations of child abuse or domestic violence?
 - a. Are there police reports?
 - b. What do the parents allege?
 - c. Are there signs that the children may have witnessed abuse of other children of a parent?
15. Thoroughly investigated any signs of substance abuse in family members?
 - a. Parents' DUI's?
 - b. Friends and neighbors, family members' allegations, intimations?
16. Written recommendation (if required) by deadline?
17. Contacted parties and their attorneys to see if there is a chance for settlement before trial?
 - a. If so, facilitate negotiations?
 - b. If settlement agreed on, prepare the document?
18. Have my witnesses subpoenaed for trial?
19. Completely prepared for trial?