

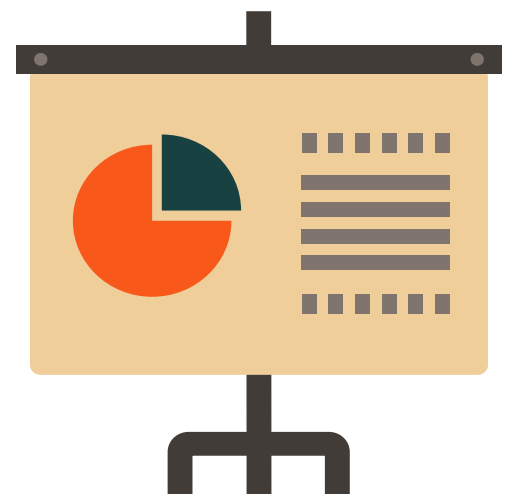


Office of the Child's Representative

Enhancement of GAL Advocacy through Case Consultants (CCs)

Case Consultants support GALs in fulfilling their professional obligations as an attorney and as outlined in Chief Justice Directive 04-06.

What are Case Consultants?



Case Consultants are professionals who work with the GAL as part of the child's legal team.

Case Consultants have expertise and experience in social work, counseling, child development, education, and other fields. Their expertise, experience, and skill set enhance a GAL's independent investigation and, ultimately, the legal positions the GAL takes on behalf of the child. CCs bill at a lower hourly rate than GALs.



Youth have reported that they appreciate the additional time Case Consultants are able to commit to be available to answer questions or concerns as they arise.



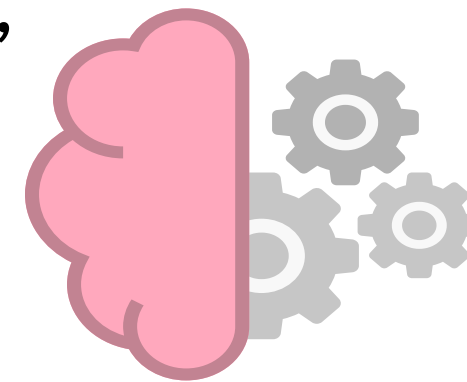
OCR's enabling legislation recognizes that the legal representation of children is "a critical element in giving children a voice in the Colorado court system" and that the representation of children requires "significant expertise."

GALs do not duplicate the work of the county department but instead independently represent the best interests of the child. The GAL's independent investigation and legal advocacy serves as a critical check and balance in the legal system and promotes the child's safety and well-being.



A growing body of research supports the use of social workers for child welfare attorneys.

Use of case consultants by attorneys can expedite time to permanency and case resolution, increase reunification, improve preservation of family connections, and increase adoption.



The ABA, the DHHS Children's Bureau, and NACC recognize the importance of an interdisciplinary team approach.

What do Case Consultants do?

01

Engage

- Maintain and facilitate ongoing contact/ communication with the child.
- Facilitate communication with the family and professionals, including the caseworker, school personnel, treatment providers, and the CASA.
- Conduct placement visits to ensure the children's needs are being met.
- Attend meetings to ensure the children's voice is considered throughout all case decisions.
- Assist GALs in out-of-court advocacy and empowering the child to develop self-advocacy skills.

02

Investigate

- Observe interactions between child and parent or child and caregiver.
- Independently locate therapeutic services or community organizations that may provide appropriate services for the child's individualized needs.
- Identify individual, family, and community strengths to build on and heal trauma.
- Explore potential family or community resources to ensure timely permanence.
- Review records, reports, and documents.

03

Evaluate

- Inform GALs advocacy regarding reasonable efforts. (Treatment, Placement, Visits).
- Assess psycho-social information and child's emotional and developmental functioning
- Identify possible obstacles and potential solutions to promote success for the child and family.
- Inform GAL positions with current research and specialized knowledge.

04

Plan

- Enhance child involvement in case planning.
- Inform plans for placement, education, treatment and permanency.
- Advocate for long term services and connections to support the child after the child welfare system is no longer involved.