

HB 1315 -- GUARDIANS AD LITEM

SPONSOR: Hicks

This bill establishes requirements for guardians ad litem (GAL). Within 21 days of appointment, a GAL must meet face-to-face with the parents and the child and provide the parents with a copy of the Missouri Supreme Court standards governing GAL. The guardian must continue to maintain contact with the child throughout the appointment, and the duty cannot be designated to a volunteer advocate or other person; however, this does not prohibit a volunteer advocate from meeting with the child.

In all proceedings for child custody or for dissolution of marriage where custody, visitation, or support of a child is a contested issue, or in a proceeding in which child abuse or neglect is alleged, and the court appoints a GAL, the appointment will be for a temporary duration limited to the purpose of conducting special investigations to assist the court in determining the best interests of the child. The bill specifies certain requirements for a GAL appointed in such a proceeding.