



North Carolina | District 17B
GUARDIAN AD LITEM
 A CHILD'S ADVOCATE IN COURT
 STOKES AND SURRY



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Guardian ad Litem Program of Stokes and Surry Counties Winter 2019

THE VOLUNTEER VOICE



Your GAL Support Team

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Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the latest reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and was approved by the U.S. Congress and signed into law in December 2015. ESSA reauthorizes the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

So what does that mean for a child in foster care?

Effective December 10, 2016, the foster care provisions of Title I under ESSA require state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) to work with child welfare agencies (CWAs) to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care.

Key Provisions of the Act include:

- A child in foster care remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in that child's best interest;
- Collaboration between the LEA and CWA to develop and implement clear written procedures for how school of origin transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for children in foster care, as well as how the transportation will be provided and funded while any disputes between the agencies are being resolved;
- If it is not in the child's best interest to stay in his or her school of origin, the child is immediately enrolled in the new school even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment; and
- That the new (enrolling) school immediately contacts the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records.



Accessing Educational Information for Your Child-Client

Are you a bit intimidated when we mention to go to the schools and ask about the education of the children for whom you are advocating? It can feel like a cold call that you don't want to make and who likes making cold calls? Who is the person to ask for at the school? What if it's a high school and there are lots of teachers for this child?

We have an answer for you that will bring a sigh of relief. The **data manager** is the go to person for lots of information about your child-client. The data manager can give you the number of absences, whether there was any behavioral problems, what the grades have been since the beginning of time, well, at least while the child has been in the same school system, and what services are being given to that child within the school system (IEP, 504, etc). This is the best contact for middle and high schools since your child-client has numerous teachers every day.

When you call the school, ask for the **data manager**. First thing, when you get them, let them know who you are, what child you are advocating for and that you want to send to them your appointment order. You will need their email address, then send them your electronic copy of your order. At that point you are covered to ask the questions concerning the child.

They might be the only one that you need to contact at the school, or they will have the information of which teacher to talk with about the child. If the child is an exceptionally identified (EC) child- special needs, self-contained classroom, you will probably want to go directly to that teacher. If you don't know, the data manager can give you the information.

Another person whom you might want to talk with is the **guidance counselor**. This person has a pulse on the school, just not the stats. And lastly, the **assistant principal** generally deals with discipline, if that's a need.

If you are trying to obtain information about a student in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade, you might start with the **Data Manager** to find out grades, absences, behaviors, but then you will want to talk with the **classroom teacher** since that is the person who sees the child daily. Ask about behaviors in class and how things are going academically. You can ask about the strengths and the struggles for the child. Also pursue what might be of help for the child. Is there tutoring available? Is there a time to talk with the child? Can you watch the class in progress? What about visiting for lunch? Our program encourages having lunch with a child if that is possible with your schedule. These children may have never had someone eat lunch with them. It makes them feel special and usually a child who has lunch with a visitor can pick a friend to eat lunch with them.

Do remember, you can talk with school staff about the child from an academic perspective or about behaviors in the classroom. However, that is the only information to discuss. Sometimes teachers are tempted to ask questions about other areas of a child's life. **That is not to be shared.** The teacher is not privy to the reasons that the child came into care, how the parents are doing, or any other topic that doesn't pertain to the child and school.

Knowing how to get to the right person is a time saver and encourages you to do it early in the process. Make those contacts for the best interest of your child-client. The child will recognize that you care, which will increase the trust.

Additional Educational Resource in Surry County

Behavior Support Specialists work with Pre-k through high school seniors. Students with several ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) are usually referred to a Behavior Support Specialist if those are causing significant behavior concerns. There are three Behavior Support Specialists in Surry County Schools. Roxanne Beamer works with the East District schools and Franklin Elementary. Dr. Alissa Combs-Draughn works with the Central District and the Early College. Martha Cook works with the North District (minus Franklin). Check to see if your child is seeing one of these professionals. They may be able to provide you with valuable information about how your child is doing in school.

We are not aware of this resource in Stokes County. If anyone has information about a similar position in Stokes County please let us know!



At our November 8th, Legal Updates In-Service, Judge Marion Boone took the time to honor GALS for their service to a large number of children. Pictured left to right; **Richard Wagner**, **Judge Marion Boone**, **Sharon Hines** and **Will Holthouser**.

Kudos Corner

We would like to recognize several other GALS for their impressive service to children:

Karen Wein-Gordon – 33 children
Hazel Jessee – 24 children

Amy Scott – 30 Children
Regina Combs -21 children

Bonnie Lambert – 25 children
Brook Suiter – 20 children

A huge THANK YOU to

Regina Combs for recruiting new GAL Linda Johnson and to Martha Cook for recruiting a colleague from Surry County schools for the upcoming class.

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our newly sworn GALS

Surry County: Amy Jessup, Debra Howlett, Linda Johnson, Kim Morris and Amber Cowan sworn in by Chief District Court Judge William Southern

Stokes County: Paula Calloway, Carol Hinkle and Donielle Griffith sworn in by Honorable Gretchen Kirkman



**Make sure to say hello
when you see these
new GALS in court!**



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Training Opportunities.....

January 17th In-Service: The Guardian ad Litem Guide

This training is an in-depth look at the Guardian ad Litem Guide. This is excellent training for new GALS and a great refresher for the more experienced advocate. It is strongly encouraged that all GALS attend this training at least once. To reserve your spot contact;

Stokes County: Jaime Kehoe (336) 593-4415; Jaime.L.Kehoe@nccourts.org

Surry County: Colleen Goetzke (336) 386-3018; Colleen.K.Goetzke@nccourts.org

Do you know someone who'd make a great advocate for children?

Training for new GALS begins in January.

Jan. 8th Orientation 4-5:30 The Pilot Center in Pilot Mountain with 5 sessions to follow. If you know someone who'd like more information or wants to submit an application ask them to visit <https://volunteerforjal.org>



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|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Linda Johnson 01/13 | Judy Rhoden 02/23 |
| Jon White 01/18 | Lisa Wagner 03/07 |
| MaryAnn Stoner 01/19 | Michelle Smith 03/13 |
| Amy Jessup 01/29 | Kevin Wilson 03/13 |
| Stacy Worthington 01/31 | Carol Hinkle 03/14 |
| Jennifer Wright 02/02 | Candace Eqteeshat 03/19 |
| Debra Howlett 02/17 | Martha Cook 03/26 |



Find us on
Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/StokesSurryGAL>

Ask your supervisor about the private Facebook Support Group exclusively for Stokes and Surry County GALS

We are grateful every day for your service to the children of our community.
THANK YOU!

Peanut
Butter
& Jelly
Campaign



volunteerforjal.org



Peanut Butter & Jelly
collection runs from Jan
2nd to Jan 22nd



Court Dates

Stokes County:

January: 17th and 18th Judge Boone, 31st Judge Langan

February: 1st Judge Langan, 14th Judge Boone, 28th Judge Langan

March: 1st Judge Langan, 14th Judge Boone, 28th and 29th Judge Langan

Surry County:

January: 10th Judge Southern, 24th Judge Key

February: 7th Judge Southern, 21st Judge Key

March: 7th Judge Southern, 21st Judge Key

****REMINDER****

Please ensure you are visiting your children enough. Our local rules and Best Practice Guidelines have determined that a minimum of once a month is necessary to effectively advocate for children in care. If you are having issues meeting this requirement please speak with your supervisor.