

Who's Who in the Court Room?

While you are in care, you will work with many adults. Knowing the roles and responsibilities of the different people will help you.

As a youth in care, you are represented by a Guardian ad litem (GAL) or a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) who is appointed by the court.

Guardian ad litem (GAL): A lawyer or a trained adult volunteer, assigned by the court to study and protect the best interests of a youth in a civil or criminal abuse or neglect case.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA): A CASA is like a GAL. A CASA is a trained community volunteer that speaks in court for the best interest of the child.

Remember to keep track of the contact information for your GAL or CASA.

GAL/CASA Name _____

Address _____

Office Phone # _____ Toll Free # _____

E-Mail _____ Cell Phone # _____



Who else will be in court?

The Judge: The judge decides what is best for the youth. The judge reads reports, hears arguments, decides whether the youth should be placed in the custody of the state, and with his/her decision, issues court orders.

Maine Office of the Attorney General: Your DHHS caseworker is represented by an Assistant Attorney General. The Child Protection Division of the Office of the Maine Attorney General represents the state in civil child abuse and neglect proceedings throughout Maine.

Attorneys: Biological parents have the right to be represented by attorneys in court hearings.

Bailiff: The Bailiff is an officer of the court who helps out the judge.

Court Clerk: The clerk sits next to the judge and takes notes about what happens in court.

Foster parents: Depending on your situation, your foster parents may attend.

Birth Parents: Depending on your situation, your birth parents may be a part of the child protection case and may be at most case hearings.

YOU: You have the right to be heard during court. Remember...The members of your family team meeting can help you prepare for this day.

...Answers for youth in care, by youth in care