



# Guardian Ad Litem

## Overview

As Family Law attorneys, we are tasked with representing our clients while looking out for the best interests of the children. Our attorneys have been appointed to act as the Guardian Ad Litem in numerous matters.

### What is a Guardian Ad Litem?

The Guardian Ad Litem is responsible for reporting on what is in the best interests of the child or children. The Guardian Ad Litem meets with both parents, the child, and any other witnesses, as appropriate. The Guardian Ad Litem becomes a party to the case and is permitted to be involved in all aspects of the case. Once a Guardian Ad Litem is involved, any resolution must be approved by the Guardian Ad Litem, in addition to the Judge. If necessary, the Guardian Ad Litem issues a report, which is considered before any judicial decision is made.

### What does a Guardian Ad Litem do?

The appointment and tasks of a Guardian Ad Litem are regulated and governed by Florida Statutes. If the Court finds it is in the best interest of the child, it may appoint a Guardian Ad Litem to act as next friend of the child, investigator, or evaluator, not as an attorney or advocate. The Court may also separately appoint legal counsel for a child, but the Guardian Ad Litem and the legal counsel cannot be the same person. Also, the Guardian Ad Litem is not necessarily an attorney, but can be otherwise trained or qualified.

### Do I need a Guardian Ad Litem?

The short answer is "no," except when there is clear abuse or neglect of a child or children. However, Judges find it very helpful in high conflict divorces, especially when time-sharing or certain issues in a parenting plan cannot be agreed upon between the parents. In some instances, the Guardian Ad Litem is paid for by the parents in an amount shared as decided by the Judge or agreement.

Whether we are involved in your case as the Guardian Ad Litem or advocating on your behalf when a Guardian Ad Litem has been appointed, our attorneys understand the role and the sensitivity of this area of the law. We take a compassionate yet strong approach on behalf of our clients facing matters in which a Guardian Ad Litem is involved. We understand the extreme emotional impact on all family members, especially the children, particularly if you are facing circumstances that require the input and guidance of a Guardian Ad Litem in your parenting.

## Meet Our Team

### Lead Partner(s)



**Tracy Newmark**  
Partner, Fort Lauderdale



### Partner(s)



**Natalie S. Kay**  
Partner, Fort Lauderdale



## Attorney(s)



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