

LAW GUARDIAN ADMINISTRATION

Lorraine M. Augostini, First Assistant Public Defender
Chief Investigator Paul Fitzpatrick
25 Market Street, P.O. Box 850
Trenton, NJ 08628
Tel: 609-530-3623 Fax: 609-530-7880

LAW GUARDIAN APPELLATE

James Louis, Deputy Public Defender
Mountain View Office
840 Bear Tavern Road, 2nd Floor, Ewing, NJ 08628
Tel: 609-530-3623 Fax: 609-530-7885

DYFS CONFLICT UNIT

Managing Attorney: Seetha John-Holmes
Asst. Chief Investigator: Debra Asberry
Mountain View Office
840 Bear Tavern Road, 2nd Floor, Ewing, NJ 08628
Tel: 609-530-3623 Fax: 609-530-7886

CAPITOL REGION

Managing Attorney: Seetha John-Holmes
Asst. Chief Investigator: Annie Prochorenko
Mountain View Office (Mercer, Hunterdon, Burlington)
840 Bear Tavern Road, 2nd Floor
Ewing, NJ 08628
Tel: 609-530-3623 Fax: 609-530-7880
Burlington Office
100 High Street, Suite 102
Mount Holly, NJ 08060
Tel: 609-518-3068 Fax: 609-518-1277

SHORE REGION

Managing Attorney: Gilbert Zlock
Asst. Chief Investigator: Deborah Wong
Atlantic City Office (Atlantic, Cape May)
157 West White Horse Pike, Galloway, NJ 08201
Tel: 609-748-1360 Fax: 609-748-7005

Managing Attorney: Joseph Suozzo
Asst. Chief Investigator: Ahisha Quallis
Asbury Park Office (Monmouth, Ocean)
630 Bangs Avenue, 3rd Floor, Asbury Park, NJ 07712
Tel: 732-869-2268 Fax: 732-869-2261

SOUTHERN REGION

Managing Attorney: Kelly Donegan
Asst. Chief Investigator: Tracey Smith
Gibbsboro Office
(Camden, Cumberland, Salem, Gloucester)
20 East Clementon Road, Suite 301 North
Gibbsboro, NJ 08026
Tel: 856-346-8008 Fax: 856-346-8017
Bridgeton Office 14 East Commerce St., 3rd Floor
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
Tel: 856-459-7350 Fax: 856-459-7358

NORTHERN REGION

Managing Attorney: Traci Telemaque
Asst. Chief Investigators: Nadia Simmons and
Caridad Ferrell
Hackensack Office (Bergen, Hudson)
60 State Street, 3rd Floor
Hackensack, NJ 07601
Tel: 201-996-8065 Fax: 201-996-8919

ESSEX REGION

Managing Attorney: Guadalupe Casillas
Asst. Chief Investigators: Carmen Figueroa and
Eleanor Lesperance
Newark Office (Essex)
31 Clinton Street, 2nd Floor, P.O. Box 46007
Newark, NJ 07101
Tel: 973-648-4572 Fax: 973-648-3220

CENTRAL REGION

Managing Attorney: Lillian Brennan
Asst. Chief Investigators: James Jackson and
John Gallus
(Middlesex, Union, Somerset)
New Brunswick Office
172A New Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Tel: 732-246-5912 Fax: 732-729-6573
Elizabeth Office
65 Jefferson Avenue, 4th Floor
Elizabeth, NJ 07201
Tel: 908-820-8971 Fax: 908-820-7898
Somerville Office
75 Veterans Memorial Drive East, Suite 203
Somerville, NJ 08876
Tel: 908-575-3200 Fax: 908-575-3218

NORTHWEST REGION

Managing Attorney: Yvonne DeCicco
Asst. Chief Investigators: Renee Lassiter and
Rachelle Browne
(Passaic, Morris, Sussex, Warren)
Paterson Office
66 Hamilton Street, 5th Floor
Paterson, NJ 07505
Tel: 973-977-4185 Fax: 973-225-7145
Morristown Office
250 Headquarters Plaza
Morristown, NJ 07960
Tel: 973-451-5630 Fax: 973-451-5638
Newton Office
20 East Clinton Street, Newton, NJ 07860
Tel: 973-383-5002 Fax: 973-383-9949

Law Guardian: The Children's Voice



Our mission is to deliver the highest quality of child-centered advocacy that best assures children's rights to health, safety, and well-being and that promotes their best opportunity to thrive.

Joseph E. Krakora
New Jersey Public Defender

Lorraine M. Augostini
First Assistant Public Defender
Office of Law Guardian
25 Market Street, P.O. Box 850
Trenton, NJ 08625
Tel. 609-292-7087
Fax 609-777-4496



Hon. Chris Christie
Governor
Kim Guadagno
Lt. Governor

What is a Law Guardian?

A Law Guardian is a specially trained lawyer employed by the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender's Office of Law Guardian who represents children in family court matters involving allegations of abuse and neglect against parents or other caregivers.

The Law Guardian, also referred to in this brochure as the “child’s attorney,” represents the child in court by presenting the child’s wishes and making recommendations to the judge as to how those wishes may best be accomplished. The Law Guardian also protects the child's legal interests throughout the court proceedings and maintains a lawyer-client relationship with the child to the extent possible.

The child’s attorney gives the child legal advice about the best and most realistic course of action to protect the child’s safety and to advance the child’s wishes and interests.

The Law Guardian is also responsible for helping the child understand his/her legal options and for assisting the child in developing a legal position. Further, the Law Guardian explains the court process to the child and keeps the child informed as the case progresses through the child welfare system.

The special training and expertise of Law Guardians help the child participate fully in the court hearings. The child’s attorney speaks directly with the child, and interacts with the other parties in the case on behalf of the child.

Confused about the role of the Law Guardian?

Many people are confused about the term “Law Guardian” because in New Jersey, “guardian” can have many different meanings. It may help you to understand the role of the Law Guardian, if you keep in mind that:

(* **A Law Guardian is not the** same as a “guardian” or “guardian ad litem,” legal terms which apply to people making parental or best interest decisions for the child.

(* **A Law Guardian represents** only the child, never other parties or other people interested in the case. For example, Law Guardians do not represent parents, caregivers, family members, resource parents or the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (previously DYFS).

A Law Guardian can help by

- articulating the child's wishes
- advocating for the child in court
- helping to arrange services
- obtaining an expert evaluation of the child

You may hear some unfamiliar terms when involved in an abuse or neglect case. Such as:

Title 9: A case in which a civil complaint has been filed against a child’s caregiver alleging abuse or neglect. Also referred to as FN cases.

Title 30: A case in which the termination of parental rights is sought, clearing the way for a child to be adopted. Also referred to as FG cases.

The Role of the Investigator

Each Law Guardian attorney works as a part of a team of professionals on behalf of the children they represent. This team includes specially trained investigators and clerical staff. Investigators take an active role in meeting with the child to discover the relevant facts of a case necessary to developing a position on behalf of the child-client. Similar to the confidential relationship enjoyed by attorneys and investigators in other types of matters, Law Guardian attorneys and investigators also enjoy confidential relationships with the children they represent. It is not unusual for the attorney or investigator to ask to speak privately with the child either in school, in a foster home, or even in the home of parents or other relatives. This private meeting is an important part of protecting the confidential attorney-client relationship.

The singular training and expertise of Law Guardian investigators enables them to effectively interview other people involved in the child's life in order to gather facts about the case and to help further the client's position. It is important that these individuals give the investigator clear and accurate information that will allow the child’s lawyer to develop the best legal position for the child.

Frequently used terms:

DGP&P: “**The Division**”, refers to the N.J. Division of Child Protection and Permanency

DAG: Deputy Attorney General

OLG: Office of Law Guardian

OPR: Office of Parental Representation