

STANDARD 2

Guiding Principles

Provides best-interest advocacy for children as reflected in these guiding principles which recognize the importance of family preservation and reunification, equity, diversity, inclusion and collaboration.

Elements of Practice

A Integrates the following guiding principles into all aspects of program practices, policies and procedures:

- 1 | Recognize the importance of family preservation and/or reunification:
 - a It is in a child's best interests to remain with their family of origin when safely possible.
 - b The program acknowledges that children experience trauma when separated from their family of origin.
 - c If a child is removed from their family of origin, it is in the child's best interests to be reunified with their family of origin as soon as safely possible.
 - d If a child is removed from their family of origin, the child should be placed with a relative whenever safely possible and in the child's best interests.
 - e Strengthening families, through recommendations for services, supports, visitation and communications, is in the child's best interests to achieve stability and/or reunification.
 - f The program requires and demonstrates respect for the parents and all parties associated with the case.
 - g The program ensures that information regarding the family's strengths is incorporated into reports to the court.
 - h The program ensures that information regarding the child's wishes is incorporated into reports to the court.
 - i When a court determines a child cannot be safely reunified with their family of origin consistent with legal mandates, another permanent placement is in a child's best interests.

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- 2 | Recognize the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion:
 - a All children regardless of age, race, ethnicity, national origin (ancestry), color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability or physical challenge should be safe, have a permanent home and an opportunity to thrive.
 - b The program acknowledges the existence of implicit bias and takes steps to minimize and/or eliminate implicit bias.
 - c The program demonstrates an understanding of disproportionality impacting children who have experienced abuse or neglect.
- 3 | Recognize the importance of collaboration:
 - a The CASA/GAL program’s governing board and the executive director, along with program staff and volunteers, cooperate and coordinate with other volunteer and public service agencies, the courts, community groups, families and individuals to:
 - i Improve services for individual children and their families.
 - ii Advocate for needed change in the conditions which adversely affect the children served.

B Provides orientation, training and continuing education for staff, volunteers and nonprofit governing board members about these guiding principles.