



# Kids **NEED** ***BOTH*** Parents

WISCONSIN FATHERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

PO Box 1742, Madison WI 53701 • info101@wisconsinfathers.org • volunteer@wisconsinfathers.com

www.wisconsinfathers.org • https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinFathersForChildrenFamilies

For Help: <http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/contact-form.htm>

Comment to a pending rules petition - **Petition to Amend Supreme Court Rule 35.015 (intro.) and (1), Relating to Qualifications for Appointment as a Guardian ad Litem in an Action Affecting the Family**

I represented **Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families**, on the Legislative Study Committee where this petition originated. We (WFCF) are **opposed** to this requested rule change for the following reason:

Requiring 50% (*3 out of a total of 6 hours*) of a GAL's initial training requirement, to be regarding domestic violence training puts a disproportionate amount of emphasis on only one of the **16 factors** that are used in determining the **best interest of a child**.

Domestic Violence is a significant factor in a relatively small percentage of family courts decisions, when compared to the **65%** of family court decisions where only one parent is significantly involved in a child's life, post parental separation. Significant parental involvement is defined as over 25% of parental time with each parent. This statistic originates from the following study done in WI in 2011: [https://www.irp.wisc.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Task4A\\_CS\\_09-11\\_Final\\_revi2012.pdf](https://www.irp.wisc.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Task4A_CS_09-11_Final_revi2012.pdf)

There is an overwhelmingly agreed on public understanding that children will do best in life with two parents significantly involved in their lives (shared parenting), if that is arrangement is at all possible.

In summation we (WFCF) are very much in favor of providing WI GAL's with additional training in all of the factors that define a child's best interest. GAL's recommendations are very frequently used to identify and establish a placement order which is a huge responsibility to those children, their parents, and the state. Providing GAL's with more tools to make appropriate and effective placement recommendations benefits children, their parents, as well as the state of WI. The tools we provide GAL's should be focused on a child's best interest and all of the factors that define that best interest.

Sincerely,

Tony Bickel

President **WFCF**

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