



**Training for Court Visitors and Guardians ad Litem  
The Uniform Guardianship Act as it Relates to Minors**

**Washington State Superior Courts, Court Visitors, Guardians ad Litem and Training Providers**

# Credits

This curriculum was developed from feedback and input gathered from a combination of historical resources, stakeholders, advisory members and subject matter experts listed in your manual.

The materials and/or forms included within this publication are for use by Washington State Title 11 Court visitors and guardians ad litem, Superior Courts, and training providers as a guide. DSHS nor any contributor(s) make express or implied warranties regarding the accuracy, timeliness or reliability of statements, forms, articles, or other materials contained herein. Court visitors, guardians ad litem, legal professionals and lay persons must depend on their own legal knowledge, research and expertise when referring to or utilizing any information contained herein. Any views or conclusions expressed herein are not necessarily those of DSHS, the Superior Court, or individuals listed below. Please note that all suggestions for improvement of this handbook are highly encouraged. If you have any comments, questions, or feedback for this curriculum, please contact DSHS\ALTS\HCS TCDU Training developer at [TCDUTrngDev1@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:TCDUTrngDev1@dshs.wa.gov). If you need legal advice, please seek a qualified attorney.

Please note that this training may be adapted to meet county specific procedures and requirements. Ask your trainer or local county courts for specific forms that are available, recommended or required. Each county in Washington may vary and have specific tools available to you. It is your responsibility to become familiar with these tools.



# Agenda

| Time | Lesson   |
|------|----------|
|      | Lesson 1 |
|      | Break    |
|      | Lesson 2 |
|      | Lesson 3 |
|      | Lunch    |
|      | Lesson 4 |
|      | Break    |
|      | Lesson 5 |
|      | Lesson 6 |





## **Module 1: Introduction to the UGA**





## **Lesson 1: Introduction to Uniform Guardianship Act (UGA) as it Relates to Minors and the Roles of Court Visitors and Guardians ad Litem**

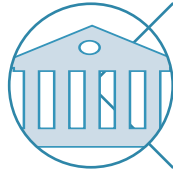
The learner will identify UGA actions related to minors and compare the roles and duties of court visitors and guardian ad litem.

# Overview

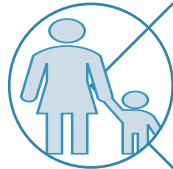
To ensure a minor's rights and interests are protected ... the court may ... appoint a court visitor or guardian ad litem.



# Summary of UGA Actions



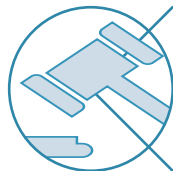
Basis for Appointment



Limited versus Full Guardianship

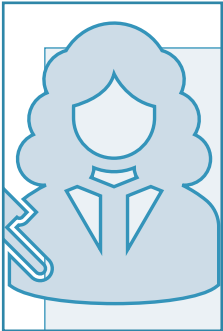


Emergency Guardianship

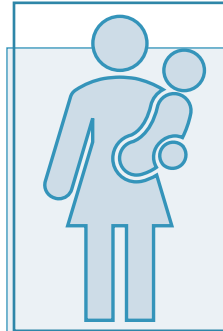


Immediate Orders within a  
Guardianship

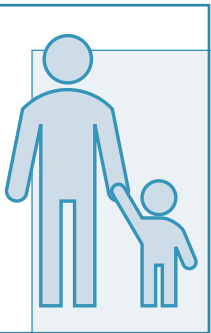
# Summary of UGA Actions



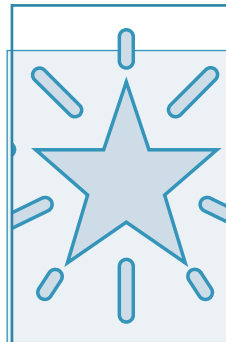
Standby  
Guardianship



Minor Conservatorship



Protective  
Arrangement for a  
minor




Eligibility/Qualifications  
for CVs and GALs



# Court Visitor (CV)

- Definition of a Court Visitor
- Role of a Court Visitor



A young woman with her head resting on a man's hand, looking down thoughtfully. The man is wearing a dark suit and a white shirt, and the woman is wearing a dark blue patterned top. They are sitting at a wooden table. The background is slightly blurred, showing a desk and some papers.

## Duties of a Court Visitor

- Statutory Duties
- Court Ordered Duties





# Guardian ad Litem (GAL)

- Definition of a Guardian ad Litem (GAL)
- Role of the Guardian ad Litem



# Duties of the Guardian ad Litem

- Statutory Duties
- Court Ordered Duties

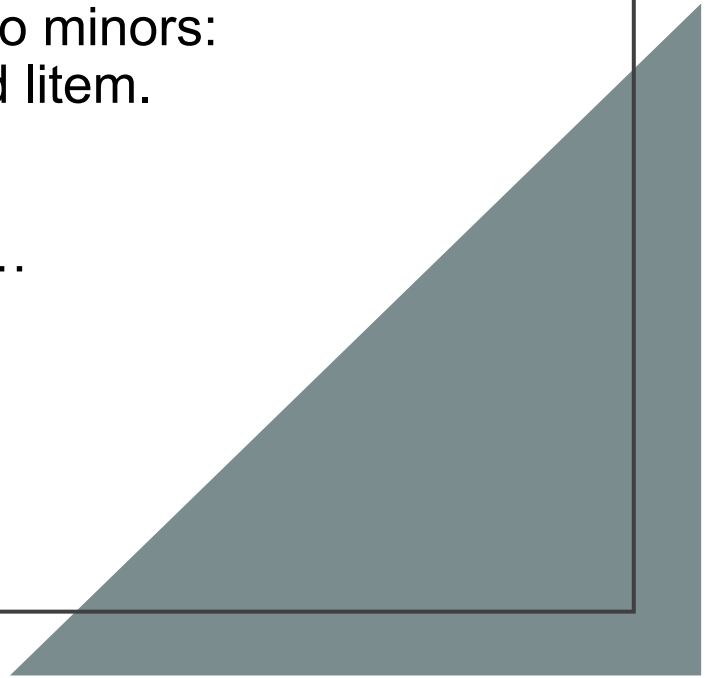




# County Specific

What you need to know about county specific procedures related to minors: court visitors vs. guardian ad litem.

How to find this information...





# Checkpoint

Check your knowledge





## **Module 2: Procedural and Ethical Considerations for GALs and Court Visitors**



## **Lesson 2: Procedural and Ethical Considerations for GALs and Court Visitors**

The learner will describe the difference between actions for initiating a minor guardianship and emergency minor guardianship and summarize notice requirements.

# Overview

...notice requirements ...minor's rights are understood by the minor and protected within the guardianship process...review and explain court forms and procedures with parents and/or minors...







# Initiating a Minor Guardianship Action

- Who May File
- Contents of Petition
- Required Documents

# Initiating Emergency Minor Guardianship



HOW INITIATED



BASIS FOR  
APPOINTMENT



DURATION

# Notice Requirements

## Minor Guardianship

- Personal service
- Notice by other means
- Additional notice requirements

## Immediate Order for Emergency Guardianship

- Reasonable notice
- Immediate emergency guardianship



A person wearing a white shirt with red and blue polka dots is sitting at a wooden table, opening a brown envelope. The envelope is held open by their hands, and a white piece of paper is visible inside. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting with a window and some furniture.

# Notice Requirements

- Role of Court Visitor
  - Unable to serve parent
  - Parent waives notice or consent
- Hearings
  - Initial hearings
  - Status/review hearings

# Notice Requirements

- Finalization of Guardianship
- Termination of Guardianship

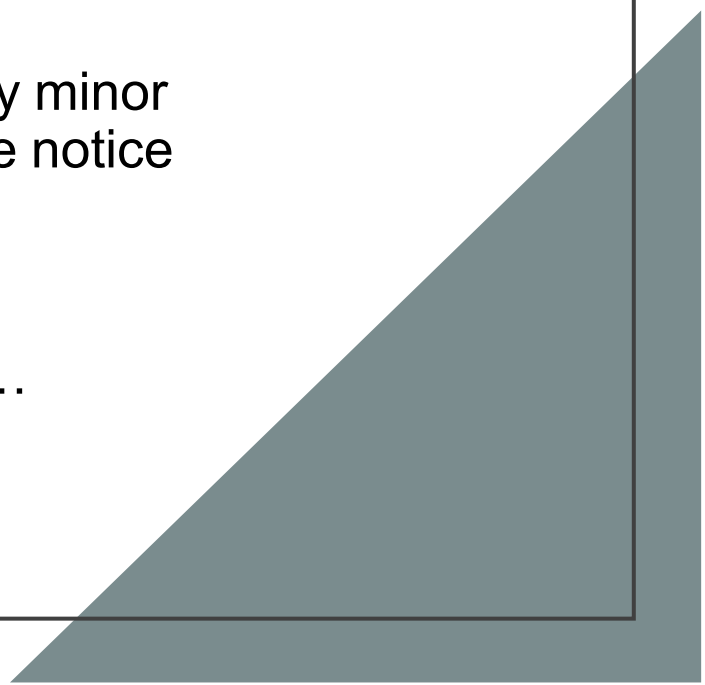




# County Specific

County specific differences between actions for initiating a minor guardianship and emergency minor guardianship and summarize notice requirements.

How to find this information...







# Checkpoint

Check your knowledge




## **Lesson 3: Protecting the Rights of Parents and Children in Minor Guardianship Proceedings**

The learner will identify the rights of a parent, and a minor and recognize the role of a court visitor and GAL to protect the rights of parents and children in minor guardianship proceedings.

A large teal circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

# Overview

Parents and minors (12+) have rights in minor guardianship proceedings.

A decorative graphic consisting of several short, dark grey dashes arranged in a curved, upward-sloping pattern in the bottom right corner of the slide.



# Rights of Parents



## Rights of Minors





# Role of CV and GAL

- Legal Papers and Correspondence
- Confirmation of Parent Consent
- The Minors Wishes/Position







# County Specific

County specific information on rights of a parent, and a minor or the role of a court visitor and GAL to protect the rights of parents and children in minor guardianship proceedings.

How to find this information...



# Checkpoint

Check your knowledge



## **Lesson 4: Ethical Considerations for GALs and Court Visitors**

The learner will recognize ethical considerations for GALs and Court Visitors.



# Overview

Attorney and non-attorney GALs and CVs are officers of the court and must be aware of professional conduct in and out of the courtroom.



# Statutory Requirements

A GAL or CV shall not engage in ex parte communications with any judicial officer involved in the matter for which the GAL or CV is appointed.

# Court Rules

State

17 Details of Etiquette  
for GALs

Local





# Considerations

Diversity  
and Equality

Implicit Bias

Considerations

Racial Bias

Racial Blindness

Systemic Racism

# LGBTQ+

- Ally
- SOGIE
- LGBTQ+ Definitions
- Statistics for LGBTQ Youth







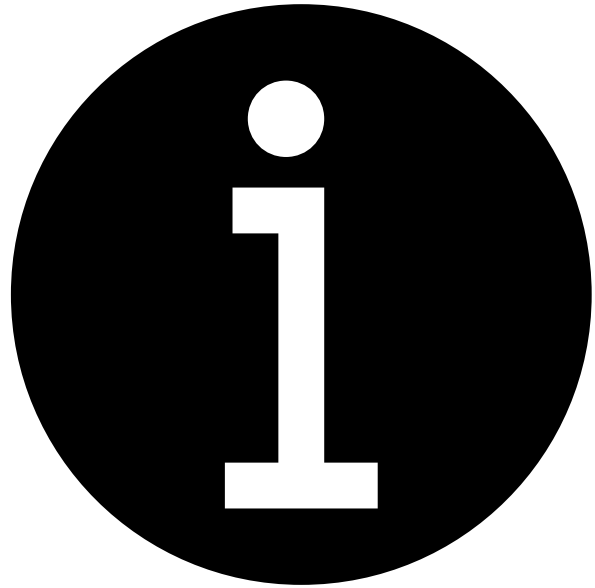
# Developmental and Cognitive Disabilities

- What is important TO?
- What is important FOR?
- When and what did you do WITH?

# Cultural Considerations

Culture –  
Definition  
and Impact

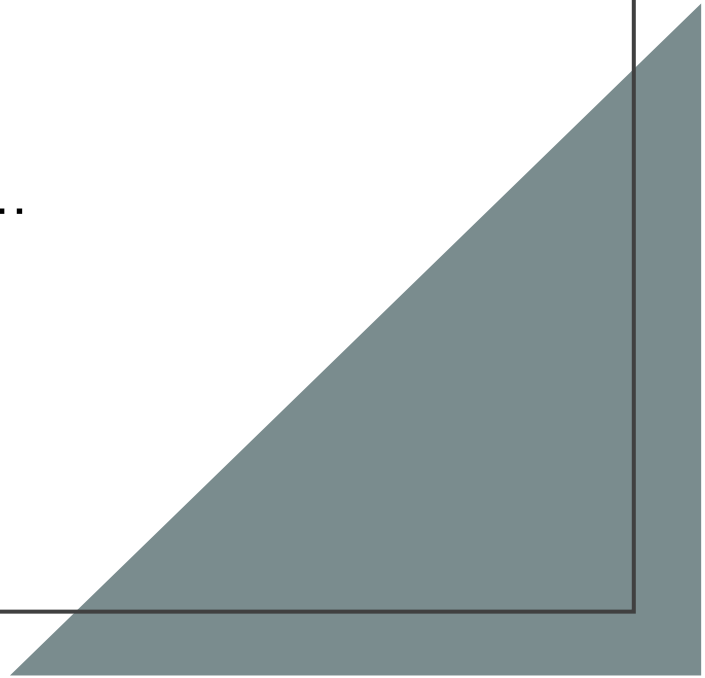
Cultural  
Competence



# County Specific

County specific ethical considerations  
for GALs and Court Visitors.

How to find this information...







# Checkpoint

Check your knowledge



## **Module 3: Guardian Ad Litem Investigations in Minor Guardianship Proceedings**



## **Lesson 5: Basics of a GAL Investigation and Report**

The learner will identify the GAL intake process and recognize the records to collect and investigate for each case.



# Overview

The GAL has responsibilities for investigation and reporting for each case. Individual counties may vary on reporting, check with your local county.

# Intake



Introductory Steps



Intake

# Interviews

1

## Interviews

- Documentation

2

## Individuals to Interview

- Petitioner and/or Proposed Guardian
- Parents
- Child(ren)

3

## Collateral Contacts





# Home Visits and Parent/Child Observations

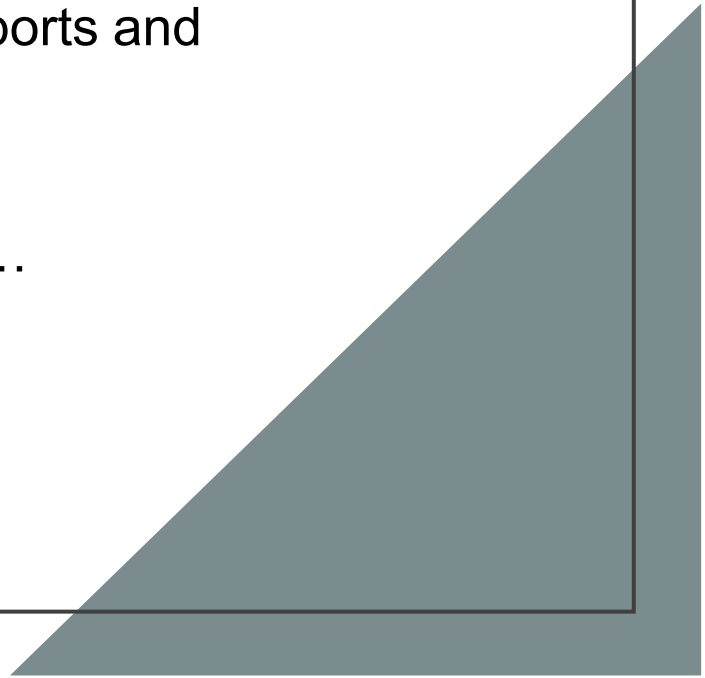
- Collecting Documents and Records
  - Department of Children, Youth and Families
  - Criminal History
  - Police and 911 Records
  - Medical and Mental Health Records
  - Academic Records
- GAL Report



# County Specific

County specific information about interviews, intake, forms, reports and requirements

How to find this information...





# Checkpoint

Check your knowledge





## **Lesson 6: Dealing with Complex Issues Concerns in GAL Investigations**

The learner will recognize GAL responsibilities when complex concerns arise during investigations.

# Overview

GALs encounter complex concerns during investigations. It is the responsibility of the GAL to investigate these topics and to also be aware of child development stages.



# Substance Use

- Substance use disorder
- Interviewing a parent
- Actions to take





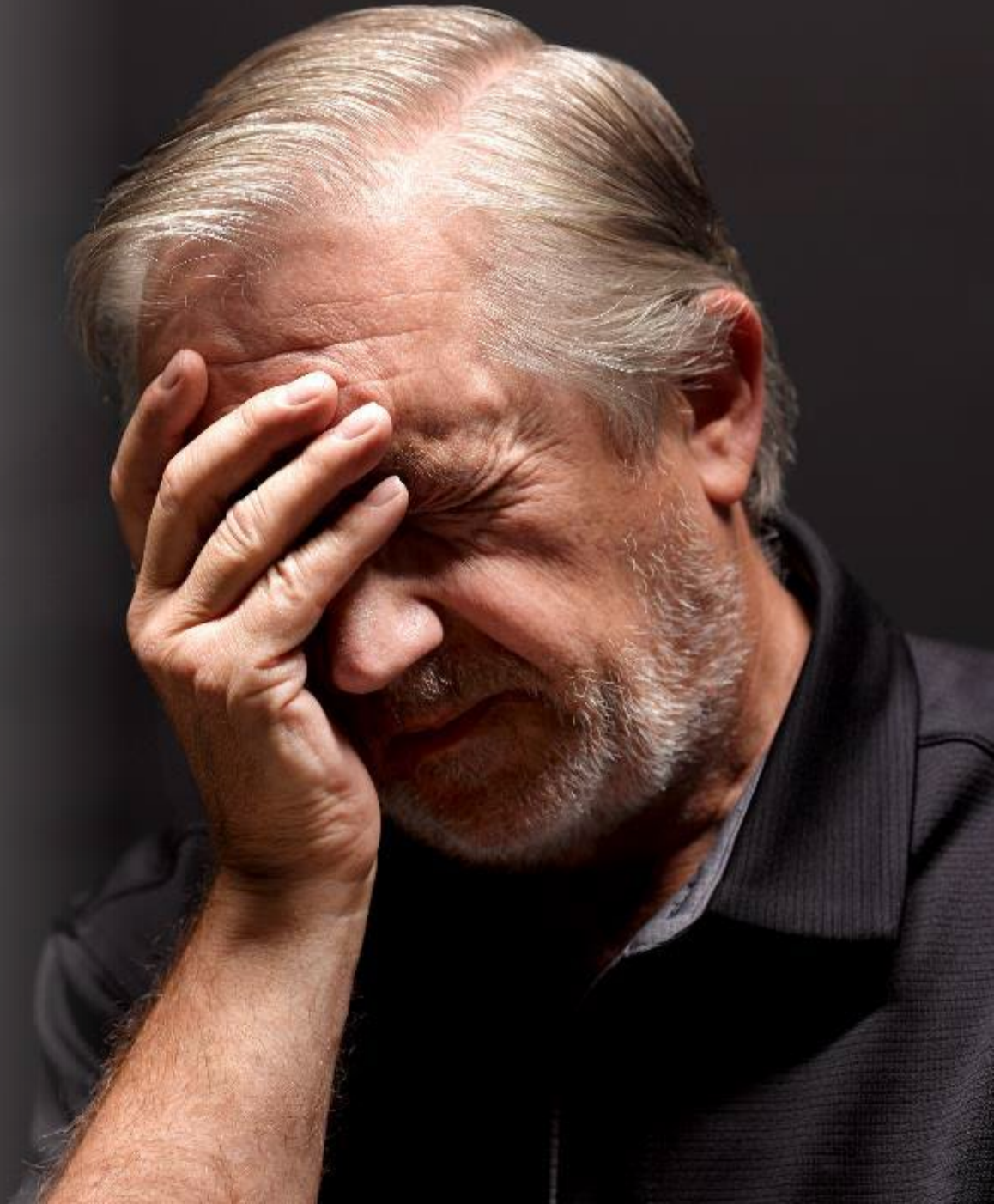
# Mental Health

- Youth Mental Health
- Investigating Mental Health Conditions



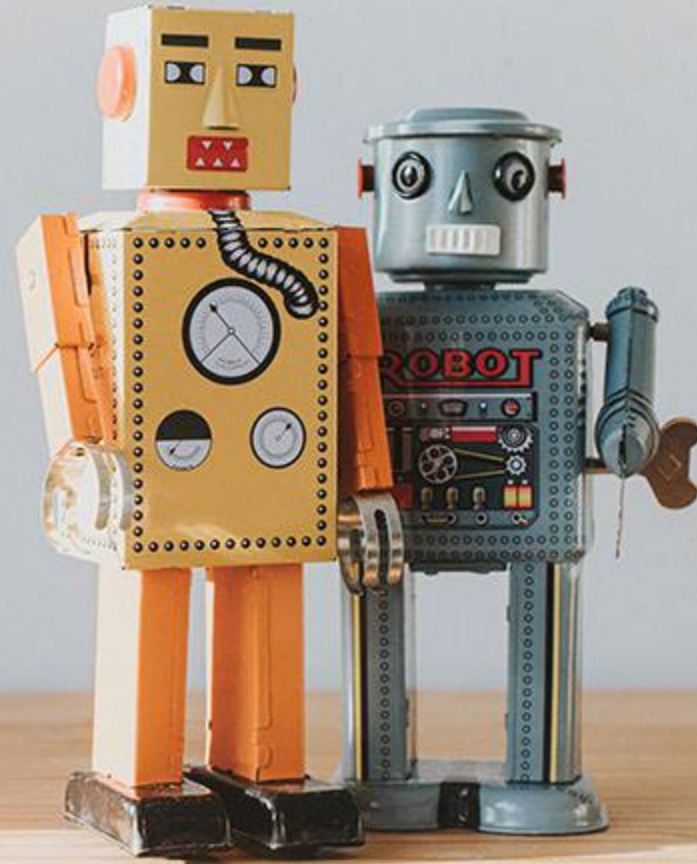
# Domestic Violence

- Physical harm
- Intimidation
- Coercion and threats
- Economic abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Isolation



# Abuse and Neglect

- Neglect
- Physical and Sexual Abuse



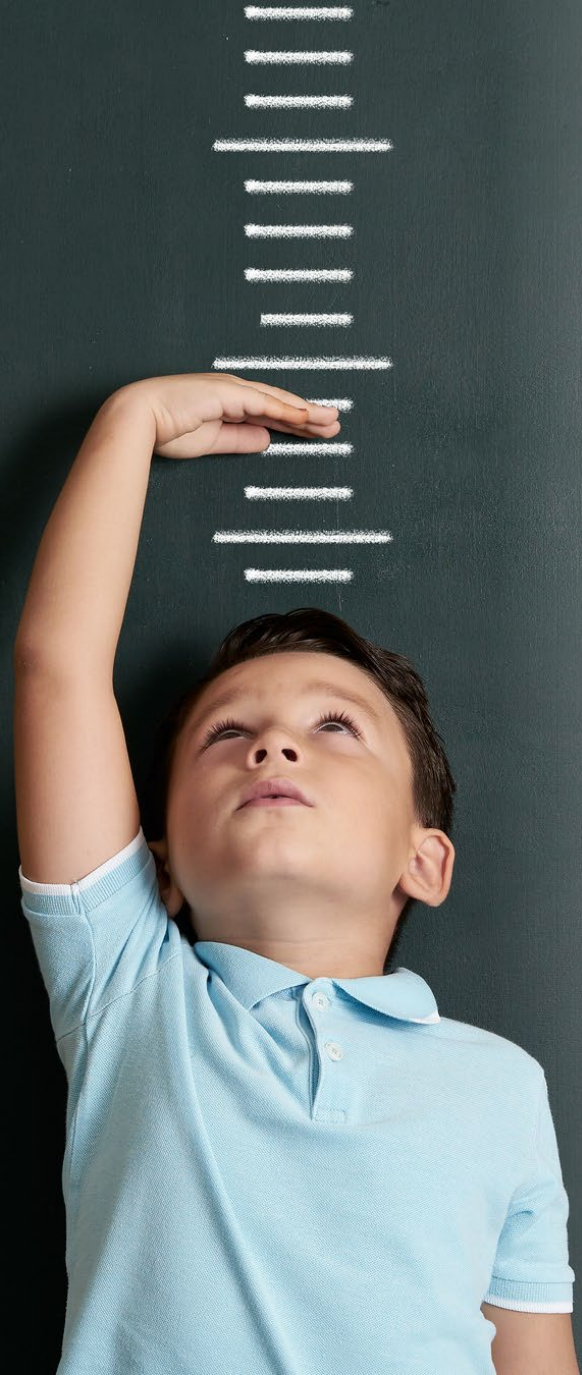


# Childhood Trauma

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- Trauma Types: Acute, Chronic, Complex, Historical
- Emotional and Behavioral Responses to Trauma
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)





# Child Development

Stages

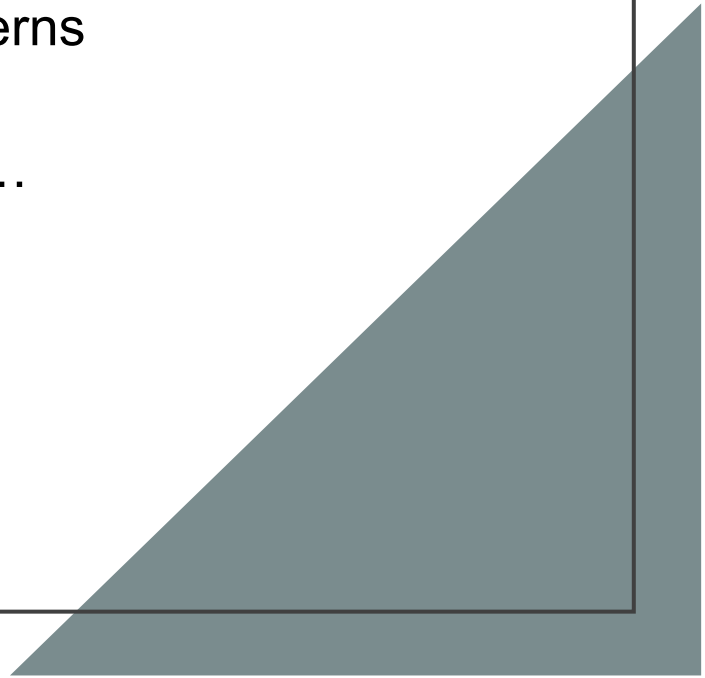




# County Specific

County specific information on encountering complex concerns during interviews.

How to find this information...





# Checkpoint

Check your knowledge



**Thank you for participating in this training. For questions, contact:**

**Washington State Superior Courts, Court Visitors, Guardians ad Litem and Training Providers**