



Children in court need lawyers of their own.
We're working to make sure they have them.



Mythbusters on Counsel for Kids in Dependency Court

Myth : Children always express a desire to return to their homes, regardless of the home's safety.



Fact : No child wants to be put into harm's way. We have a legal system where all voices should be heard before judges render their rulings. Attorneys elevate the child's voice, but a judge makes the ultimate case decisions after hearing from all parties.

Myth : Children do not need attorneys because there are enough other adults involved in their dependency case to make decisions on their behalf.



Fact : Child welfare professionals have differing responsibilities and obligations. Attorneys are specially positioned to ensure children are seen, heard and represented in the proceedings that impact their lives.

Myth : Confidential communications shared by children with their attorneys put them at risk of harm.



Fact : When children are silenced or ignored, they are unsafe. The confidential attorney-client relationship allows children to feel safe sharing sensitive and deeply personal information with attorneys that might otherwise go unvoiced.

Myth : A child's eligibility for legal representation should be based solely on their age.



Fact : No two children are the same. Child development and growth can vary widely among same-age peers. High-quality legal representation requires attorneys to be trained in areas such as child development, child interviewing, and trauma so that they are equipped to engage with a child in a developmentally appropriate manner to establish the attorney-client relationship.

Myth : Attorneys for children and volunteer lay advocates fulfill the same role.



Fact : Attorneys for children and volunteer lay advocates fulfill two separate and distinct roles. While a volunteer lay advocate can be helpful in conveying information to the court, they are not substitutes for legal representation of a child. They are prohibited from rendering legal advice or otherwise engaging in the practice of law.

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