

Importance of a mindful, trauma-responsive approach

To build trust and strengthen the attorney-client relationship

To encourage transparency in commuications

To create avenues for advocacy for appropriate services

Children entering foster care often endure significant trauma, including abuse, abandonment, or neglect. This trauma may be intensified by the loss and separation associated with foster placement.

It is the role of the an attorney ad litem to ascertain the stated interest of the child. Taking measurable steps to address the needs of the child ensures that the child receives high-quality legal representation and advocacy.

The purpose of a trauma-responsive approach is to promote the resilience of the child!



To support resilience & healing

For more guidance on fostering a trauma responsive practice, please find the website below for Gator TeamChild Juvenile Law Clinic Scholarship.



Connect with Us
352-273-0800
scholarship.law.ufl.edu
/gator-team-child/





Trauma Responsive Approach

Gator TeamChild
Juvenile Law







Attorneys ad litem can aid the child in regulating trauma and lowering anxiety levels associated with unfamiliar environments.

Attorneys ad litem should consider these steps to build trust, open a line of communication, and exceed the duties of the role.





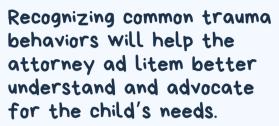
Client-Centered Approach



- Meet outside of court with minimal distractions + removed from threatening parties
- Work individually with the child to develop case plan options to present + advocate for the child's stated interest
- Emphasize the child's decisionmaking ability
- Consider therapy animals to increase participation by providing comfort and reducing cortisol

Preparing for Court

- Prepare for court by explaining the process, advocacy, potential questions
- Explain key takeaways after court to avoid misunderstandings
- Opt for legal names and full titles to avoid confusion



Trauma may manifest in certain behaviors such as elopement, which can be perceived as uncooperative by the court. The child may also exhibit excessive compliance with adults or severe reactions in an effort to gain recognition.

Attorneys ad litem should advocate for their clients by gently reminding the court that these behaviors reflect underlying trauma, and consider the root of these behaviors when advocating for resources. Child clients value communication and feeling heard.

Common responses to trauma include a consistent sense of fear, helplessness, sadness, inability to sleep, hypervigiliance.

