

Attorney for the Child

Who is the Attorney for the Child (AFC)?

- The AFC is a specific lawyer with special education and certifications who represents **YOU** in court.
- They are hired by the state and don't work for anyone but **YOU**.
- It is their responsibility to speak on **YOUR** behalf after carefully considering **YOUR** wishes.

When is an AFC Assigned?

- A parent or guardian is accused of abuse and/or neglect.
- A parent or guardian wants custody or the right to visit.
- You are placed in foster care by a parent or guardian.
- Minors are in trouble or need extra supervision.

AFC Summary of Responsibilities

- Starts representing **YOU** as soon as they are assigned to your case by the court.
- Meets with **YOU** before a court hearing.
- Represents **YOU** at all court proceedings and actively participates on **YOUR** behalf.
- Continues to meet with **YOU** regularly and maintains communication.
- Reviews your paperwork and history and speaks with the people involved with **YOU**.
- Considers all options for **YOU** and explains them to you.
- Remains available to **YOU**.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I expect?

Expect your AFC to do their job. They will try to get to know you and a bit about your life so they can help you make the best decisions.

What will the AFC expect of me?

They will expect you to be open and honest, as well as willing to help them help you.

Will my AFC tell anyone what we talk about?

Everything you say to your AFC should be confidential, unless you are currently harming yourself or others, intend to harm yourself or others, or if someone else is harming you or others.

Can my AFC come to service plan reviews?

Your AFC **MUST** be invited to them.

Can I go to court?

Talk with your AFC about whether you should and under what circumstances you can attend.

What if I am a JD/PINS youth?

Your AFC is your defense attorney.

Glossary of Common Terms

Advocate: A person who speaks or writes to support or defend a person or cause.

Criminal court: The court that handles criminal cases that involve illegal actions.

Guardianship: The position of being legally responsible for someone.

Family court: The court that deals with issues of family, youth and children.

Foster care: A place to live while youth and their family obtain care and the support they need. The purpose is to provide a safe home and maintain wellbeing when a parent cannot.

JD (juvenile delinquent): A youth between the ages of 7-18 who commits a crime. They may be placed in foster care.

Trial discharge: A period (at least 6 months) when a youth in foster care is living on their own or with a parent, relative or other adult permanency resource before final discharge.

Visitation plan: A plan for the youth in foster care to see their families, including how often, how long, and where and whether the visits should be supervised.