



Not All Guardianships are Created Equal: Where to File for Custody or Guardianship of a Minor Child

Written by Judge Angélica D. Zayas - Associate Administrative Judge, Unified Children's Court

Guardianship of a minor can be a complex issue. The words “guardian” and “guardianship” can mean different things in different courts and in different contexts. As a result, it can sometimes be difficult to determine which statutes apply and which court division has jurisdiction to determine the guardianship or custody of a minor child. To address some of the confusion experienced in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in the Family, Probate, and Unified Family Divisions, Chief Judge Nushin G. Sayfie issued [Administrative Order 22-06](#) on April 29, 2022, setting forth the guidelines applicable to guardianship cases involving minors. This [Administrative Order](#) can be found under the General Information tab on the [Eleventh Judicial Circuit home page](#). Although cases filed in the improper division will be transferred to the proper division by the presiding judge pursuant to Administrative Order 22-06 and will not be dismissed, it is best to file the case in the proper division to avoid unnecessary delay or hardship to the family.

Unified Children's Court Division

Cases will be filed in the Unified Children’s Court Division under two circumstances. Dependency cases involving allegations of abuse, abandonment, or neglect of minor children are governed by [Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes](#) and are generally initiated by a call to the 1-800-96-ABUSE hotline. If the Department of Children and Families files a petition to have a minor child declared to be a dependent child pursuant to Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes, the case will be filed in the Unified Children’s Court Division pursuant to [section 39.501, Florida Statutes](#) and Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.201. In many cases, the parent or parents of the minor child will be given an opportunity to reunite with the child by engaging in therapeutic and/or rehabilitative services and by completing the tasks set forth in a case plan.

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What are Social Investigations?

Written by Grace Casas Rowe, Esq. | Lawofficecasasgrace@yahoo.com

In the past, social investigations have been called custody evaluations. They assess each parent’s ability to meet their children’s best interests. This normally covers parental responsibility and timesharing. Social investigations are supposed to provide the Court with recommendations about parental responsibility and time-sharing to judges, who then decide final judgments.

When one parent calls the other’s parenting into question, the court often orders an investigation so the judge has accurate, unbiased information. Cases involving special circumstances like domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse, mental illness, long-distance relocation or a child with special needs are also likely to require social investigations.

Because the statute mandates specific professionals with credentials, the cost may be a barrier to the parents. Often the costs can range from \$1,500 to \$5000 or more if the parents were to pay the providers directly. The investigator will contact both parents and their attorneys (if they have them). The investigators normally conduct home visits where they speak to the parents, the child and any other members of the households. The investigator will also review documents such as, but not limited to, medical/mental health records, police reports, the filings in the family’s court case and any other documents the parents and/or Guardian feel are important.

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Havana Nights Nostalgia Photos



Thank you to our new partners, loyal current partners, fabulous event attendees, and our generous donors! You all made our 2023 Havana Nights Nostalgia a night to remember. It was a lovely evening with all of our wonderful partners and friends as we honored Andi Steinacker with the Maxine Cohen Lando Award. Thanks to your support, KidSide can continue funding essential services for families in need. Your contributions are making a difference in our community!

Check out all of the photos from this fantastic event and be sure to join us at our next event!

Photos Here

Parent Testimonial



The testimonial below is from an anonymous patient who received therapy sessions paid for by KidSide:

This testimonial was given to express gratitude for the therapy sessions funded through KidSide. I would like to attribute much of my progress to the accessible and professional support provided by this grant and the therapist that we saw during my sessions.

The guidance received has been very helpful to me in understanding and addressing the cause of my struggles. I felt safe and secure with the non-judgmental space they created during my sessions. The communication was great, and my sessions were done at a time that worked for me and my schedule.

The commitment to mental health has undoubtedly changed lives, including mine. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity. I truly hope that others will continue to benefit from the vital support it offers.

Services Funded in September 2023



Newly Funded Program

the Advocate  Program

KidSide
Taking the kid's side in high-conflict court cases.

KidSide has approved \$10,000 in funding for Bridging Families and Communities (The Advocate Program) to provide supervised visits and therapeutic in-person visitation. Co-parenting and individual counselling is also offered.

Welcome our New KidSide Partner



Welcome our new KidSide bronze partner, [Armenteros Law, P.A.](#) Thank you for choosing to support KidSide.

Are you a individual or part of a business who wants to be a KidSide partner? We have the opportunity for you!

Learn More

Become a KidSide Champion



WHAT IS GIVE MIAMI (DAY)

Give Miami (Day) is the largest annual giving event in Miami. Individuals donate to support Miami non-profits through an online campaign hosted by the Miami Foundation from November 13th - 16th.

WHY BE A KIDSIDE CHAMPION

If you believe in the important work of Kidside be a Champion to support our mission! As a Champion for KidSide you reach out to your friends and family near and far to request donations to support our mission. Becoming a Champion also expands our reach to inform people about the impact we have in our community.

HOW TO BE A CHAMPION

As a KidSide Give Miami (Day) Champion, you will create a unique peer-to-peer fundraising page to express the reason why you want to be an advocate for the work we do and the children we serve.

- Set up Champion Page
- Email/Text your Champion Page link to your contacts November 13-16
- Make the first donation to set the pace for giving
- Thank the people who donate to support your efforts

RAISE MONEY FOR KIDSIDE!!

REGISTER TO BE A CHAMPION
CONTACT MARIAN@KIDSIDEMIAMI.ORG

www.kidsidemiami.org

Give Miami Day

Now is the time to register to be a KidSide Champion this Give Miami Day! Join our esteemed group of champions as we work to raise funds to help support families and children in need here in South Florida.

Committed Give Miami Day Champions

Patty Arechabaleta	Cassandra Ferrer	Rebecca Perra
Lisette Beraja	Amber Glasper	Emily Phillips
Eboni Barrow	Matt James	Adriana Quirantes
Chris Beck	Stacey Jones	Eric Sachs
Tiffany Cannava	Vanessa Lyon	Aileen Siclait
Grace Casas	Josh Lopez	Andi Steinacker
Alexandra Courson	Adelmis Naderpour	Malissa Tigges
Janelle Fernandez	Michelle Multack	Erica Whittler
Cassandra Ferrer	Marian Ortega	Patricia Young

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Thank You KidSide Partners

Diamond (\$25,000+)

Gold (\$10,000-\$19,999)

Silver (\$5,000-\$9,999)

Bronze (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Make a difference in your community today. [Join KidSide as a partner](#) and get recognized in the KidSide newsletter and on social media, plus other fantastic benefits.

Thank you to all of our existing partners for their continued support of KidSide.

SUPPORT KIDSIDE
Become a KidSide Partner

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