Notes from the Chair

By Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Esquire

The PBA Children’s Rights Committee was officially established in 1993 following the release of the ABA report on America’s Children at Risk. Since that time, the Committee has been examining the multitude of legal problems which affect children, with a goal of promoting more effective advocacy on behalf of children. For the past four years, the Committee has hosted a CLE specifically focused on the issues which affect attorneys representing children. In a recent survey of interested attorneys, many expressed an ongoing interest in the Committee’s legal education programs as well as an opportunity for networking among attorneys in the field. In 1996, the Committee produced a directory of attorneys that represent children across the state and we are currently in the process of updating that directory. The Committee is also in the process of creating a secure listserv for Committee members to discuss current practice issues. In December of 1999 we hosted a forum on the “Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Children” and are planning a follow-up forum for October 2000.

As we begin a new year of our Committee (in PBA time), we are focusing on work on the following six subcommittees:

• Current Issues for Child Advocates Seminar: In collaboration with the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, members will develop the curriculum and select presenters for the committee’s annual six credit CLE program.

• Legislative Action: Members will review pending legislative proposals and consider developing a Committee position to be addressed to the PBA Board of Governors.

• Newsletter: Produce a publication to update child advocates on current legal topics that affect attorneys who represent children and to provide updates on committee activities.

• Child Advocate of the Year: Members will solicit and review nominations to select the award winner. Last year’s award recipient was the Honorable Max Baer of Allegheny County. Previous Award recipients were Frank Cervone and Heidi Ulrich Dennisson.

• Standards of Practice: Members will review recent changes to the Juvenile Act that directly impact the role of attorneys representing children and develop options for hosting a Forum in early fall with the Juvenile Court Judges on this issue.

• Law for Kids: Members will work with Bar Association staff on implementation of the Project Peace program and the development of a Web site Contest for high school students to design an interactive legal education program.

It is not too late to sign up and join any subcommittee of interest. Please contact Louann Bell at the PBA (800-932-0311 ext. 2276) to join.
By Joan M. Smith, Esquire

There is no question that the computer has revolutionized family life. Information from the far reaches of the world can be accessed into our living rooms within minutes through the World Wide Web. The PBA Web Site Contest seeks to harness some of the creativity and resourcefulness that children have attained and to offer an educational resource as well. Children have legitimate educational and recreational purposes for spending hours in front of a computer screen. But, because of “identity theft” and “cyber-stalking,” we must be concerned with protecting both their safety and their privacy.

The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) (codified at 15 U.S.C. 6501 et.seq.) was signed into law in 1998 and the final implementing rule (published at 16 C.F.R. Part 312 or available at www.ftc.gov.) became effective on April 21, 2000. The Rule requires commercial web sites that are “directed to, or knowingly collect information from, children under 13” to obtain “verifiable parental consent” before collecting, using or disclosing personal information from children. The sites must provide notice both on the site and directly to parents about their policies on collection, use and disclosure of the children’s identifying information.

What does “verifiable parental consent” mean? For the next two years, as it applies to internal uses this consent may be by a mere confirmatory e-mail. Of course, we all know any computer-savvy child can access and respond to a request for consent. A “more reliable method” of confirmation is required for personal information to be disclosed to third parties or made publicly available through chat rooms or interactive activities (and will be required for all uses after two years). These include print-and-send via mail or facsimile, use of a credit card or toll-free number, digital signature, or e-mail accompanied by a PIN or password. One problem with this consent requirement is that the child has already disclosed the private information before the parent receives notice. Nevertheless, the parent has the option of having the personal information deleted and refusing to permit further collection and use of the information.

COPPA requires clear and prominent notice of privacy and that parents have an option to consent on the site. This requires those supervising children to check the sites their children visit to make sure this information is clearly displayed and written in understandable language. Violations should be reported to the FTC and civil penalties apply. We cannot prevent our children from providing personal information, but perhaps with greater vigilance we can protect them from potential threats of abuse.

Editor’s Comment

Upcoming Conferences

- September 22, 2000
  PBA Legal Services to Children Committee Seminar, IDEA: Honor the Past…Imagine the Future in Harrisburg. For information contact PBA at 800-932-0311, ext. 2276 or PBI Customer Service at 800-932-4637.

- October 13, 2000
  Children’s Rights Committee Forum on Standards of Practice, For information please contact 800-932-4637.

- October 19, 2000
  Support Center for Child Advocates Volunteer Training Workshop at the Wanamaker Building in Philadelphia. For fees and registration information call 800-932-4637.

- April 23-28, 2001
  Thirteenth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Faces of Change: Embracing Diverse Cultures and Alternative Approaches in Albuquerque, New Mexico. For more information contact PaLTech, Inc., 1901 N. Moore St, Ste 204, Arlington, VA 22209.

PBA Children’s Rights Committee

Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Chair
Scott Hollander, Vice Chair
Kenneth J. Horoho Jr.
  PBA Board of Governors Liaison
Doreen M. Graziano
  Joan M. Smith
  Newsletter Co-Editors
Louann Bell, PBA Staff Liaison

Jill E. Gouse
  PBA Newsletter Liaison

Copyright © 2000 by the PBA Children’s Rights Committee.

To Submit Articles

We invite submission of articles or letters to the editor. Please send essays, comments or suggestions to Doreen Graziano at facsimile (570) 451-1870 or Joan Smith at facsimile (215) 635-5003.
**Update on the Law**

*Troxel v. Granville,* decided June 5, 2000 by US Supreme Court

Known as the grandparents’ rights case, there were potential implications for the power of states and family courts to protect children’s relationships with kin, extended family, and de facto caregivers. A plurality opinion by the US Supreme Court concluded that a Washington statute giving any person at any time standing to seek court-ordered visitation as it applied in Troxel, violated the mother’s constitutional right to decide how to rear her children. The Court did not decide whether the Washington statute was unconstitutional in all circumstances and noted doubt that visitation statutes should be treated as per se unconstitutional. In practice, the liberty interest of parents must be given due deference, but the balancing of state and private interests will be elaborated in future cases. Child advocates may find a roadmap for arguing that children possess constitutionally protected interests in family relationships in Justice Steven’s opinion. (From ABA Child Law Practice, July 2000).


Foster children who were sexually abused by foster parent’s son stated claim of intentional infliction of emotional distress against child welfare placement agency. Placement of children in home despite foster parent’s son being on child abuse listing represented outrageous and reckless conduct that resulted in great emotional stress for foster children. (From ABA Child Law Practice, July 2000).

**Standards of Practice Forum to be Held Oct 13, 2000**

Mark your calendar now to join child advocates and juvenile court judges in a discussion of Act 18 and how it will affect dependency court proceedings in Pennsylvania. This legislation which requires attorneys to serve as guardians ad litem representing the best interests and legal interests of their child clients, was signed into law in May. In addition to prescribing the role of the child advocate, the law mandates that the child advocate meet regularly with the child, participate in all court and administrative hearings and reviews, conduct investigations to ascertain the facts, interview potential witnesses including parents, examine and cross-examine witnesses, make recommendations as to the safety and appropriateness of the child’s placement and services, explain the proceedings to the child, and advise the court of the child’s wishes and present evidence of same.

The parameters and potential pitfalls of the new law will be discussed in a full day forum conveniently located at PBI headquarters in Mechanicsburg. With the 6 CLE credits offered for this program and those at our spring seminar, it is now possible for child advocates to complete their yearly CLE requirements with courses specifically oriented to the representation of children. For more information contact PBI Customer Service at 800-932-4637.

**Child’s Rights Committee Activities**

**Legislative Action**

Chaired this year by Eleanor Bush, the subcommittee anticipates reviewing changes to the Adoption Act that should be forthcoming soon. We also expect the next legislative session to give consideration to making changes in the testimony of child witnesses in criminal matters. A new PBA legislative liaison will be joining us as Ed Haines is no longer with the PBA. Subcommittee meetings will commence in the fall as the legislature is not currently in session.

**Law for Kids**

Past PBA President Lou Teti envisioned several programs whereby students could learn about the law and their legal rights. Joan Smith is overseeing efforts to develop a Web site Contest whereby high school students will have the opportunity to design an educational Web site aimed at teaching students about their legal rights. Participants will utilize Know Your Rights by the ACLU as the foundation for substantive information. An announcement to public, private, and home schooled students will be distributed in the fall.
An Expanded Role for the Guardian Ad Litem

By The Honorable Chester T. Harhut

Judge Harhut established the “Kids First” program in Lackawanna County, where he serves in an administrative and judicial capacity on the family court.

After sitting as a Family Court judge for only a short while, it became quite obvious that litigation does not serve the best interests of the children. First of all, one or both parties may have the good fortune or the resources to retain the services of a skillful attorney who may present the client’s case very well. Or the focus of the case and the rules of evidence will work to the benefit of one parent or the other. However, it does not necessarily hold true that we have considered or that we have provided for the best interest of the children. During the early stages of any domestic proceeding, we usually see parties at the apex of conflict and anger. They make numerous unsupported allegations and self-serving statements. Very often one or both parents are unrepresented which generally results in confusing, contradictory and unsubstantiated evidence. Consequently, courts struggle to balance the child’s best interest within the family conflict. Without relevant facts, court orders may unwittingly compound the child’s problems. How then can a judge be confident that the order protects the children and provides for their best interest?

Courts can attempt to overcome this dilemma by considering the appointment of a guardian ad litem (GAL) for the children of litigants. The GAL can provide relevant information, which the parties have not or cannot reveal. More important, a GAL can help the court grasp a clearer picture of the psychological and social convictions of the parents.

Although states vary widely in their procedures and programs, the literature indicates that guardians ad litem generally fulfill five basic roles: (1) a fact finder (2) legal representative (3) a case monitor (4) mediator (5) an information and resource broker.1

Pennsylvania rules and regulations require the appointment of a GAL for children when a proceeding alleging child abuse has been initiated. Under those circumstances, the GAL must be an attorney.2 If the case is initiated under the Child Protective Services Code, the attorney is generally expected to represent the child’s best interests. However, most of the cases are filed under the “Juvenile Act,” where the definition of “dependent” includes abuse.3 In that case, the attorney would represent the child’s wishes. Whether the representative represents the child’s best interest or the child’s wishes, the court should always be made aware of the child’s wishes. Yet, Pennsylvania counties differ on the nature and responsibilities of the GAL. Some counties appoint GALs in criminal abuse, custody, incompetence and termination proceedings; but rarely.4

In Lackawanna County, in addition to appointing an attorney in neglect and abuse cases under The Child Protection Services Code and in juvenile proceedings, we have been using GALs in protection from abuse and high conflict custody cases. By “high conflict,” we mean cases where children may be at risk of emotional or physical abuse. The risk factors may be identified from the petition, the actions of the parties and from the comments of the parties. They may include (1) intense hostility and anger, (2) allegations of child abuse, (3) the mental or psychological fitness of one or both parents, (4) parental alienation, (5) drug and alcohol abuse, (6) substantial interference by a significant other, (7) the child’s exposure to numerous live-ins, (8) the parents’ inability to communicate, (9) lack of sufficient problem solving skills, (10) allegations or behavior which gives rise to a concern for the health and/or safety of children or spouse.

We see many of these same indicators in protection from abuse cases; although in most protection from abuse cases, we see a great deal more anger and hostility. The testimony is often confusing and contradictory. Usually, we can identify an abuser and remove that abusive parent from the family home. This does not insure the well being of the child. Certainly the physical abuse may have subsided, however, the child may remain in an emotionally unstable environment. Moreover, if the evidence does not substantiate abuse, at least, we know something is very wrong and the entire family may be at risk.

By entering a Temporary Protective Order based on the limited information presented, we can provide a safe living environment. We may also be able to make temporary parenting arrangements or establish a supervised visitation plan. In the meantime, the GAL can begin performing important tasks for the court and the families’ benefit.

The tasks a GAL can perform are aimed at accomplishing our primary goal of providing a safe and stabilized family environment for the children. To that end, the GAL’s role as fact finder, assessor of family needs, human service facilitator and monitor of the families progress is crucial. While performing these duties the GAL represents the “best interest” of the child, even though the GAL might at times be required to advocate for the child. On the other hand, the GAL should at all times make the child’s wishes known to the court even if those wishes are contrary to the GAL’s own recommendation.

During the initial fact-finding process, the GAL must interview all significant parties, including parents, grandparents, significant others and professional service providers such as

(Continued on page 6)
Who Will Protect Your Rights?

By James B. Keenan, Esquire

James B. Keenan is with the law firm of Hoffmeyer and Semmelman in York, Pa.

Our forefathers set forth a Constitution to guarantee certain rights to citizens of the United States of America. During the last several years, however, a person’s right to be represented by competent legal counsel in order to protect one’s constitutional rights is being assaulted on many fronts. There are consistent efforts to erode the protections which are presently afforded to persons involved with the legal system by weakening the role of attorneys in that system.

An article by the Honorable Chester T. Harhut, who presides over family law matters in Lackawanna County, is entitled “An Expanded Role for the Guardian Ad Litem.” Judge Harhut discusses the benefits of using a guardian ad litem (“GAL”) for a child when a proceeding alleging child abuse has been initiated and for urgent custody matters. In the article, Judge Harhut suggests that non-attorneys could represent the interests of a child, not only as GAL, but that non-attorneys could represent children individually in other legal proceedings. Finally, in his article, Judge Harhut suggests that a GAL could also serve as a mediator in similar matters.

A guardian ad litem is a guardian within a lawsuit. Black’s Law Dictionary defines a guardian ad litem as “a special guardian appointed by the court to prosecute or defend, in behalf of an infant or incompetent, a suit to which he is a party, and such guardian is considered an officer of the court, to represent the interests of the infant or incompetent in the litigation.”

Pennsylvania law requires a GAL to be an attorney-at-law when court proceedings are initiated which allege child abuse. Under this law, the GAL clearly services as a legal advocate and officer of the court. The GAL is given access to “all reports relevant to the case and to any reports of examination of the parents or other custodian of the child pursuant to this chapter,” is “charged with the representation of the best interests of the child at every stage of the proceeding,” and is to “make such further investigation necessary to ascertain the facts, interview witnesses, examine and cross-examine witnesses, make recommendations to the court and participate further in the proceedings to the degree appropriate for adequately representing the child.”

Appearance before a court for representation in litigation is restricted to the litigant or to legal counsel. In addition, the unauthorized practice of law is a misdemeanor offense in Pennsylvania. This law is designed to protect the public. Do we really want to challenge the wisdom and forethought of our legislators and laws entrusting the representation of persons in legal proceedings to attorneys trained to identify and protect our rights and privileges? Do we want to set a lesser standard for a child, a most vulnerable member of the public? The answer is clearly “no.” Attorneys are specifically trained to represent persons in our legal system and to identify their rights.

Moreover, special rules and privileges apply to attorneys. In Pennsylvania, attorneys are strictly bound by rules governing discussion of our clients and client matters. This includes the attorney-client privilege as well as the rule of confidentiality in our professional ethics. Our rule of confidentiality might apply not only to what is stated to us in confidence from a client, but it also might apply to other information related to the representation, regardless of source.

There are no such rules binding non-attorneys. The GAL, as defined by Judge Harhut, would not be bound by any rules concerning confidentiality of client information. Hence, the clients working with non-attorney GAL individuals would not have security after divulging highly sensitive information to the GAL. This would seriously restrict the candor of clients who would be represented by a non-attorney GAL.

Judge Harhut also sets forth a position which is contrary to the standard set forth in 23 Pa.C.S. § 6382(b) because the GAL identified by Judge Harhut would conduct the duties of the GAL as an advocate for the child and then convert into a non-partisan mediator. An attorney at law would likely be prohibited from acting as mediator after advocating for one of the parties due to the inherent conflict of interest which would result. It behooves one to try and understand how a person advocating for an individual’s rights in a court of law could then act as a mediator. I believe Judge Harhut’s suggestion attacks the very foundation of the attorney/client relationship and the role of the legal representative as a professional legal advisor and advocate.

The article by Judge Harhut further suggests that a GAL who is also an attorney may feel the need to represent the child in legal proceedings, however, such representation should be approached with caution. In many counties in Pennsylvania attorneys are appointed to represent children in dependency and juvenile cases. Again, an attorney is the only professional who can adequately represent, investigate, defend and advise

(Continued on page 7)
An Expanded Role

(Continued from page 4)

teachers, physicians and friends. In addition, the fact-finding process can also help each parent learn the attitudes and concerns of the other parent, which they may have overlooked in the foray of mudslinging and alienation of each other. When interviewing children, the GAL must balance the interest of gaining information with excessive and inappropriate interviewing of children. Meeting with and observing the child at play and in the company of siblings, parents and care providers may prove more beneficial and less harmful. In addition, the GAL must be on the alert not to misinterpret a child’s statements as systemic of anger or fear of a parent and use that information to recommend placement. The GAL must speak to the child in terms the child can understand and must be open and honest while at the same time being discrete.

Although direct interviews are an appropriate and effective means of acquiring information, we believe one of the most effective tools at the GAL’s disposal is her/his ability to make unannounced home visits. Attorneys may vigorously object to unannounced visits, but under the “best interest” principal, the visit may not only be a good idea, it may be a duty in certain, if not all cases. The surprise visit can also reveal facts otherwise unobtainable.

The fact-finding process may also reveal parental deficiencies or shortcomings. By identifying these needs, a GAL can be crucial in helping the court, attorneys, parents, human services and mental health professionals, and mediators to ensure that the needs of the children are being met. Once dysfunctional parents begin to learn effective problem solving strategies and learn more about child development, they can become effective parents.

The guardian’s role as a resource broker involves identifying appropriate community services and advocating for them when necessary. The GAL is not the child’s support system but must see that one is in place.

The GAL must vigorously monitor the case to ensure that all involved parties follow through on obligations to the child and court. In the monitoring function, the GAL should promptly inform the court if services are not being provided, or if services are not achieving their intended purpose. In addition, the GAL must promptly advise the court of any change in the child’s circumstances or of any violation of a court order. The GAL must at all times insure that the children’s rights and best interests are not misread, minimized or neglected by their parents or the court.

If time allows, the GAL should prepare a comprehensive report containing the results of the inquiry, recommendations regarding referrals and parenting arrangements. The report should be submitted at least three days before the scheduled proceeding. If time does not permit submission of a written report, then we should allow the GAL the opportunity to make an oral report before the parties and their attorneys. We could then allow all parties the opportunity to cross-examine the GAL to reveal deficiencies or bias. Assuming the GAL performs effectively, the court will be in a better position to move forward in the best interest of the children.

While a number of jurisdictions use GALs as mediators, Lackawanna County does not. Nevertheless, we do agree that GALs are in an ideal position to mediate a family impasse. Even though we do not ask our GALs to mediate, the GAL should use his/her best efforts to resolve problems without undue delay. If a minor issue can be quickly resolved, then we see no reason why the GAL should not act. The GAL can be very effective in reducing the family discord and acrimony. On the other hand, while we do not encourage the GAL to mediate, once stewardship as guardian concludes, the former GAL maybe in an ideal position for mediation. At that point, the GAL may have gained the trust and confidence of the parties, filed a final report and been discharged of former duties. Of course, the GAL must then proceed under appropriate decorum for mediators.

Likewise, a GAL who is also an attorney may feel the need to represent the child in legal proceedings. We believe legal representation should be approached with caution. Although attorneys represent children in dependency and juvenile cases, we believe it would be more prudent to ask the court to appoint separate counsel for the guardian and child, if necessary.

We want to be careful the person appointed as a GAL is familiar with techniques of family dynamics, appropriate questioning strategies for children, and the ability to recognize sociological and physiological pathologies. Therefore, unless the guardian is a psychologist or human service person, we must insure that the GAL receives regular and appropriate training. Likewise, even if the GAL is a psychologist or otherwise trained to identify these problems, they would not know or understand the legal issues. The latter problem can be addressed more easily than the former by simply making the expertise and resources of an attorney available to the GAL. While at the same time the attorney GAL may not be trained to interview children or be familiar with the human service networks. The attorney must therefore be trained to acquire these skills. We must also remember to build an effective review system into the program. People and their work habits change. Therefore, we must review and refine when necessary.

The court order appointing the GAL

(Continued on page 8)
Who Will Protect Your Rights?

(Continued from page 5)

the juvenile in these legal proceeds so that the juvenile’s rights are fully protected.

As alluded to at the beginning of this article, there is an ongoing assault against the legal profession so that non-attorneys may engage in activities which are currently viewed as the unauthorized practice of law. For example, certified public accountants at some of the larger accounting firms want to become part owners of law firms, but the current state of the law prohibits such. The rules of professional conduct and disciplinary matters for attorneys state: “A lawyer shall not form a partnership with a non-lawyer if any of the activities of the partnership consist of the practice of law.” Further, a lawyer shall not practice with or in the form of a professional corporation or other form of association if “a non-lawyer” has the right to direct or control the professional judgment of a lawyer.

The CPAs advocating for co-ownership of law firms by non-attorneys set forth a variety of arguments, including the following: a multi-disciplinary practice; “one-stop shopping” and integrated service offerings for more efficient delivery of services; and an enhanced value of advice. We often observe a somewhat intimate professional relationship between CPAs and attorneys due to the interdependence between the two professions when trying to provide the highest quality of services to their client. We often see CPAs and attorneys referring clients to one another in order to accommodate the client’s needs to obtain the best services available for that client’s particular concern. In fact, you will often hear CPAs state that lawyers are some of their best referral sources. Therefore, one must ask why there is a need perceived by CPAs and some attorneys for the merger of the two professions into one multi-disciplinary firm.

The advocates for non-attorney ownership of law firms would have the consumer believe there would be some benefit generated for the consumer from such a merger. However, what has already happened and what will likely happen in the future, is that the confidentiality inherently needed in a law practice is eroded and a conflict of interest might arise from such dual representation between the CPAs and the attorneys who have merged into one office.

An article published in the July/August 1999 edition of *The Pennsylvania Lawyer*, and authored by Lewis E. Elicker III, CPA, states at the end of his article that “in the game of business, where achieving a huge commercial success is sometimes described as ’hitting a home run,’ we both want to be sure that we are getting a chance at bat.” The incentive to merge the two professions is to increase their own economic benefit. The article written by Elicker is not about the benefit to the client, and it is not about the benefit to the practice of law. It is simply about profit margins and a balance sheet mentality.

In an article authored by Lawrence J. Fox, Esq. of the American Bar Association’s Ethics 2000 Commission, which was published in the same edition of *The Pennsylvania Lawyer* as Elicker’s article, Fox states that “the independence of the legal profession is at stake.” This author is not overstating the severity of the issue with respect to the merger of law practices with other professions. There has been a similar occurrence between the medical and non-medical professionals. Anyone having any contact with an HMO or a “spin-off” of an HMO knows the detriment to patients and physicians resulting from the ownership and management of a medical practice by non-medical persons. Instead of medical doctors deciding what care should be provided to a patient, persons who have little, if any, formal medical education, make such very important decisions. As a result, we all suffer.

The consumer public as well as members of the legal profession must demonstrate a jealous protection of the legal profession if our clients are going to have their rights and interests protected. Lawyers are charged with the responsibility of having the power to initiate and defend lawsuits, and with protecting individual rights.

Abraham Lincoln is credited saying “[a] lawyer’s time and advice are his stock in trade.” There is as much truth in that saying now as there was when it was first uttered. The consumer public, including our children, must have competent legal representation based upon the needs of the client. No one but an attorney at law, trained and experienced in advocacy and in the protection of a client’s rights, would be able to provide appropriate representation in the legal proceedings. We should not jeopardize the protection of our constitutional rights, whether for perceived efficiency or lower costs, when we consider the future of our legal system.

2. 23 Pa.C.S.A. 6382(a).
3. 23 Pa.C.S.A. 6382(b).
5. 42 Pa.C.S.A. § 2524.
6. Pa.R. of Prof.Conduct 1.6, comment.
7. Pennsylvania Rules of Professional Conduct (Rule 5.4(b)).
8. Pennsylvania Rules of Professional conduct (Rule 5.4 (d,3)).
must be definitive and clear. The parties should be told what to expect from the GAL and what the GAL and court expects from them. They should be given written instructions for future reference. The case can be reviewed at a set time or upon request of the GAL or one of the parties. From the court's point of view, the process works very well. We would suggest using GALs when appropriate. You should also find their assets helpful in arriving at a conclusion focused on the best interests of the children. The GAL can also be helpful to attorneys who must represent their client's wishes. While the parents' attorney must zealously represent their interests, the attorney may have personal reservations of the parents' child rearing abilities. In that case, the GAL can provide the parents' attorney an opportunity to fully represent the parent without the attorney jeopardizing her/his duty.

A guardian though no guarantor of success may provide additional information and insight on the children's "best interest." While at the same time, the parents may be afforded the opportunity to become mature and responsible parents.  

2 2 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 2223 (a)  
3 42 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 6302  
5 A New Role for the Guardian Ad Litem, Richard K. Schwartz, {Fna} Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution, p. 17