

## **05-05-20 GAL ZOOM SUPPORT MEETING**

In attendance: Andi Steinacker, Jessica Allen, Cindy Bobadilla, Patricia Baglietto, Dominique Jones, Carol Cohan, Carol Ballent, Sara Burris, Aurelio Rojas, Yvonne Palmer-Bennett, Mary Cain, Barbara Parker, Mirta Fuentes, Becky Gil, Karla Aguilera, Alejandro Planas, Shelly Buncher, Rosi Alvarez, Angela Brown, Stacey Blau, Carol Klopfer, Loretta Kendregan, Margarita Morrell, Maryj Walton, Elle Shreer, and Frances Damus

This was a “just GALS” meeting (supervisors and admin too!) where we had the opportunity to discuss what was/wasn’t working, our concerns, or just shared ideas.

- **ZOOM court hearings**

- All hearings will continue to be heard via ZOOM until at least 7/2/20.
- Please be sure to communicate with your attorney prior to the hearing to discuss how you will be communicating, if necessary, with each other during the hearing. Some attorneys prefer email; others prefer texting. Make sure you have a plan for what you want to address during the hearing prior to the hearing and reach out to your attorney if you have concerns.
- If the parents require a translator, make sure their attorney has requested one in advance.
- Remind the parents to charge their phones if they are using them to connect to the hearing. One parent’s phone died, and the Judge had to reschedule the hearing for the following week.
- It would be very helpful if the Judges put the titles or affiliation of the hearing participants on their pictures or made sure everyone announced clearly who they are (CLS, the agency, GAL, etc.) so everyone would know who the participants are. It is very difficult when all you see is pictures - -especially if the hearing is a new case or with a Judge you haven’t appeared before previously.
- Speak up -- it is still important for you to share information.

- **Summer camps/other programs for children**

- We do not know at this time what will be happening with summer programs. You can discuss what types of programs your children would be interested in if camps are open. You should also be discussing this issue with the Case Manager.
- We will also check with Citrus to see if they have heard anything.
- I checked with Dorothy (Voices), and so far, they have not received any information.
- Some programs are gradually opening- you might check Jiu-Jitsu and Karate programs. There are some open now in Homestead.
- Some day cares are also opening, but for a limited # of children. If the caregiver or foster parent must go back to work, you can work with the case manager to try to find a day care that will accommodate younger

children. This doesn't solve the problem of what to do with older children (elementary, middle school) who cannot be left alone.

- The State GAL office offered a webinar called *What to Know About Internet Danger Facing Children*. It was highly recommended and encouraged for all to watch if it becomes available again. Difficult subject matter, but very worthwhile.
- Individual therapy and tutoring are being offered virtually. If therapy and tutoring have been ordered and your children are not receiving services, check with your case manager. If still not resolved, contact your supervisor/ attorney.
- Many children need help with virtual home schooling. In many cases, there are multiple children and only 1 computer in the home. All the kids need a computer to home school effectively. There are many children who haven't even logged in for home schooling. Make sure the kids on your cases are up to date with their home schooling. If they need assistance and don't have tutoring, the public library system offers tutoring by Dade County teachers; the Overtown Youth Center also offers virtual assistance. Several GALS are Zoom learning with the kids to assist them with schoolwork.
- The travel ban extends to home visits. At this time, no home visits can be conducted. All visits must be by ZOOM, FaceTime, What'sApp, or Skype. You still must "see" your kids every 30 days and do a home-visit report. Once the travel ban is lifted, we will ease back into in-person visits on a case-by-case basis.

For a first-time-ever GAL Support Group ZOOM meeting, this session went really well. It was great to see so many familiar faces!