

AN ACT concerning civil law.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act is amended by changing Section 506 as follows:

(750 ILCS 5/506) (from Ch. 40, par. 506)

Sec. 506. Representation of child.

(a) Duties. In any proceedings involving the support, custody, visitation, allocation of parental responsibilities, education, parentage, property interest, or general welfare of a minor or dependent child, the court may, on its own motion or that of any party, appoint an attorney to serve in one of the following capacities to address the issues the court delineates:

(1) Attorney. The attorney shall provide independent legal counsel for the child and shall owe the same duties of undivided loyalty, confidentiality, and competent representation as are due an adult client.

(2) Guardian ad litem. The guardian ad litem shall investigate the facts of the case and interview the child and the parties. Unless the court directs otherwise, the guardian ad litem shall submit to the court and the parties a written report, written recommendations, or a

proposed parenting plan, in accordance with the child's best interests, not less than 30 days before a final hearing or trial. The guardian ad litem's written report or written recommendations shall be admitted into evidence without the need for foundation. The guardian ad litem shall be available for deposition before a final hearing or trial notwithstanding any other discovery cutoff. ~~The guardian ad litem shall testify or submit a written report to the court regarding his or her recommendations in accordance with the best interest of the child. The report shall be made available to all parties.~~ The guardian ad litem may be called as a witness for purposes of cross-examination regarding the guardian ad litem's report or recommendations. At the discretion of the court, the guardian ad litem:

(i) may be present for all proceedings, including in camera examinations of the child;

(ii) may issue subpoenas for records as part of the guardian ad litem's investigation; and

(iii) may file pleadings relating to procedural matters. ~~The guardian ad litem shall investigate the facts of the case and interview the child and the parties.~~

(3) Child representative. The child representative shall advocate what the child representative finds to be in the best interests of the child after reviewing the

facts and circumstances of the case. The child representative shall meet with the child and the parties, investigate the facts of the case, and encourage settlement and the use of alternative forms of dispute resolution. The child representative shall have the same authority and obligation to participate in the litigation as does an attorney for a party and shall possess all the powers of investigation as does a guardian ad litem. The child representative shall consider, but not be bound by, the expressed wishes of the child. A child representative shall have received training in child advocacy or shall possess such experience as determined to be equivalent to such training by the chief judge of the circuit where the child representative has been appointed. The child representative shall not disclose confidential communications made by the child, except as required by law or by the Rules of Professional Conduct. The child representative shall not render an opinion, recommendation, or report to the court and shall not be called as a witness, but shall offer evidence-based legal arguments. The child representative shall disclose the position as to what the child representative intends to advocate in a pre-trial memorandum that shall be served upon all counsel of record prior to the trial. The position disclosed in the pre-trial memorandum shall not be considered evidence. The court and the parties may

consider the position of the child representative for purposes of a settlement conference.

(a-3) Additional appointments. During the proceedings the court may appoint an additional attorney to serve in the capacity described in subdivision (a)(1) or an additional attorney to serve in another of the capacities described in subdivision (a)(2) or (a)(3) on the court's own motion or that of a party only for good cause shown and when the reasons for the additional appointment are set forth in specific findings.

(a-5) Appointment considerations. In deciding whether to make an appointment of an attorney for the minor child, a guardian ad litem, or a child representative, the court shall consider the nature and adequacy of the evidence to be presented by the parties and the availability of other methods of obtaining information, including social service organizations and evaluations by mental health professions, as well as resources for payment.

In no event is this Section intended to or designed to abrogate the decision making power of the trier of fact. Any appointment made under this Section is not intended to nor should it serve to place any appointed individual in the role of a surrogate judge.

(b) Fees and costs. The court shall enter an order as appropriate for costs, fees, and disbursements, including a retainer, when the attorney, guardian ad litem, or child's representative is appointed. Any person appointed under this

Section shall file with the court within 90 days of his or her appointment, and every subsequent 90-day period thereafter during the course of his or her representation, a detailed invoice for services rendered with a copy being sent to each party. The court shall review the invoice submitted and approve the fees, if they are reasonable and necessary. Any order approving the fees shall require payment by either or both parents, by any other party or source, or from the marital estate or the child's separate estate. The court may not order payment by the Department of Healthcare and Family Services in cases in which the Department is providing child support enforcement services under Article X of the Illinois Public Aid Code. Unless otherwise ordered by the court at the time fees and costs are approved, all fees and costs payable to an attorney, guardian ad litem, or child representative under this Section are by implication deemed to be in the nature of support of the child and are within the exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy under 11 U.S.C.A. 523. The provisions of Sections 501 and 508 of this Act shall apply to fees and costs for attorneys appointed under this Section.

(Source: P.A. 99-90, eff. 1-1-16.)