

Guardianships

Sometimes children have no mother or father to take care of them. This can happen if the parents are dead, or very sick, or in jail, or if they have drug or alcohol problems. There can be other reasons too. Another family member or a friend will need to take care of the children. This works best if a judge gives the friend or relative the legal right to act as the parent. When a judge picks someone else to care for children instead of their mother and father, that person is called a **guardian**. This plan is called a **guardianship**.

Like a parent, the guardian cares for the children until the mother and father can do it again or until the children grow up and don't need anyone to care for them. Like a parent, the guardian finds a home and a school for the children, provides food and clothes, and takes the children to the doctor when they are sick. The children are part of the guardian's family. The guardian also listens to them when they want to talk. The guardian makes them do their homework and helps them if they need it.

Parents who cannot care for their children may still love their children. If they are able to, the mother and father may visit or phone the children at the guardian's home or other places. If the parents get better, the judge may allow the parents to take care of the children again.

The judge watches the guardian to make sure the guardian is doing a good job. The parents, the children, and the guardian may see the judge to talk about any help the children need.



Who Are the People You Are Connected To?

Draw them or write their names.

