Guardians *ad litem* – Child Protection Advocates for Unaccompanied Immigrant Children.
Guardian/Advocate Program

• Chicago
• Harlingen
Brownsville, TX
• Consultation to attorneys and advocates in other sites.
Guiding Principles

• Best Interest – safety and well-being
• Child’s views must be considered – right to participate
• Family reunification
• Bi-culturalism – right to preserve identity
• Confidentiality
• Durability – permanency
Key Documents

• UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
• UNHCR Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in Dealing with Unaccompanied Children
• UNHCR Guidelines on Best Interest Determinations
• Separated Children in Europe Programme materials
• 1998 INS Guidelines
• Flores v. Reno settlement agreement
Advocate Responsibilities

• Ensure that decisions taken are in child’s best interest
• Ensure suitable legal representation
• Ensure suitable care, accommodation, education . . .
• Consult with and advise the child or youth
• Contribute to durable solution in child’s best interest
• Provide link with service-providing organizations
• Ensure family tracing and family reunification (usually at request of shelter staff)
• Advocate for the individual child – with shelter, with ORR, with attorney, with the adjudicator, through the attorney.
Advocacy

• BID Reports – “tool for child protection”
• Attorneys associated with smugglers and traffickers
• Post-release
Parental Rights

• CRC, Article 9, States shall ensure that child will not be separated from parents against their will, except when competent authorities, subject to judicial review, determine separation is in child’s best interest.

• Article 14 – States shall respect rights and duties of parents.
Immigrant Child Advocacy Center
at the University of Chicago
www.ImmigrantChildAdvocacy.org