

Families Against Court Travesties, Inc. (FACTs)
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FAMILY COURT TERMS

Attorney ad litem	Attorney, usually court appointed, for the child.
Commissioner (or Magistrate)	An appointed position. Conducts hearings and usually makes recommendations to the judge
Court appointed mediator	Paid by the litigants, sometimes unqualified, personally biased, or favors the attorney he/she is friendly with.
Court appointed psych evaluator	Paid by the litigants, sometimes unqualified, personally biased, or favors the attorney or judge he/she is friendly with.
Court appointed psychologist	Usually paid by the litigants, sometimes unqualified, personally biased, or favors the attorney he/she is friendly with.
Due process	The right to proper and adequate notice of a hearing and a full opportunity to present witnesses and evidence, cross examine and to be heard in court. A legal concept that ensures the government will respect all of a person's legal rights, not just some, before the government deprives a person of life, liberty or property.
Ex parte	An ex parte decision is one decided by a judge without requiring all of the parties to the controversy to be present.
Financial Affidavit	A statement made under oath of an individual's income, assets, liabilities, and expenses. .
Forensic audit	A financial affidavit typically performed by a CPA, for purposes of use in court.
GAL (Guardian ad litem)	Trained volunteers or paid lawyers who is supposed to be the child's advocate. Their recommendations are usually taken seriously by the judge.
Garnishment	Deducting child support from the pay check and automatically sending it to the other parent or to the state for disbursement
JA	Judge's Assistant. Sometimes very influential with the judge.
Joint Custody or Shared Parental Responsibility	Both parents have equal parental rights in making decisions for the child, i.e. school, medical treatment, religious upbringing, etc. It does not mean the child splits his/her time between both parents; that is at the judge's discretion.
PAS	Parental Alienation Syndrome: N.J. psychiatrist Richard Gardner MD, coined the term in 1987 to describe a parent who tries to turn his or her children against the other parent. It was promoted by the Fathers' Rights Groups to convince the court that whatever claims the mother makes about abuse in court, are considered a tactic to turn the child against the father. The ultimate goal is removal of the child from the home of the mother, and awarding full custody and child support to the allegedly abusive father.
Pro bono	Latin meaning for the Good. A lawyer who does not charge for services.
Pro se	Litigant without a lawyer, representing herself
Purge	Penalty for non-payment of child support, backed up by threat of imprisonment. If imprisoned, she must be allowed to purge herself from imprisonment.
Residential Custody	The parent with whom the child is assigned to live by the court.
Sole Custody	Only one parent has the right to make these important decisions.
Standard visitation.	Usually means the non-custodial parent is allowed to see the child one evening every week and every other weekend.
Visitation Supervisor	Stays with the non-custodial parent during visitation. Usually paid for by both parents.