

LAW OFFICE OF  
**SUSAN CASTLETON RYAN, P.C.**

ATTORNEYS REPRESENTING CHILDREN  
GIVING A VOICE TO CHILDREN  
by Melaney G. Hodge, Esq.

I recently received specialized training to participate in “Attorneys Representing Children,” or “ARC,” which is a new initiative in Plymouth County. The ARC Program allows a judge to appoint an attorney to represent children involved in cases pending before the Probate and Family Court. Unlike a guardian ad litem, an ARC attorney represents the child’s position, rather than determining what is in the “best interest” of the child. The ARC Program has successfully operated in Barnstable and Bristol counties for several years and will soon be implemented in Plymouth County.

ARC attorneys are typically appointed in highly contentious and litigious cases, including cases regarding custody, visitation, or removal. The ARC attorney has the ability to file motions on behalf of the child, attend court hearings, and present evidence on behalf of the child at trial. ARC appointments are made by the court on a pro bono basis. A party may request an ARC appointment by submitting a motion to the court.

I am truly looking forward to the experience of providing a voice to children who are meant to be protected by our system, but are sometimes sadly overlooked.

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