

**OPINION SUMMARY**  
**MISSOURI COURT OF APPEALS EASTERN DISTRICT**

**DIVISION FOUR**

JAMES D. COPLING,	)	No. ED99554
	)	
Plaintiff/Respondent,	)	Appeal from the Circuit Court of
	)	Warren County
vs.	)	
	)	Honorable Thomas J. Frawley
LIN GAO,	)	
	)	
Defendant/Appellant.	)	Filed: May 13, 2014

Lin Gao (“Mother”) appeals from the trial court’s judgment dissolving her marriage to James Copling (“Father”) and awarding sole custody of the minor child to Father. Mother contends the trial court erred by: (1) failing to make written findings under section 452.375, R.S.Mo. (2000); (2) awarding Father sole custody; and (3) failing to appoint a guardian ad litem under section 452.423.2 despite Mother’s allegations of abuse.

REVERSED AND REMANDED.

DIVISION FOUR HOLDS: Mother’s allegations of abuse triggered the trial court’s duty to appoint a guardian ad litem under section 452.423. Accordingly, we reverse and remand for the court’s appointment of a guardian ad litem and a new trial.

Opinion by: Lisa S. Van Amburg, P.J.  
Patricia L. Cohen, J. and Philip M. Hess, J. concur.

Attorney for Appellant: Michael-John Voss  
Daren Rich – co-counsel

Attorney for Respondents: James Copling, pro se

<b>THIS SUMMARY IS NOT PART OF THE OPINION OF THE COURT. IT HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE READER AND SHOULD NOT BE QUOTED OR CITED.</b>
--