

OUR YOUTH DESERVE BETTER: CHANGING LAWS, POLICIES & LEGAL PRACTICES

presented by

COMMISSION ON YOUTH AT RISK • COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY •
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE • CRIMINAL JUSTICE, JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE
CENTER ON CHILDREN AND THE LAW

February 4, 2010
Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel

9:30 – 11:30 am

Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel • Room: Europe 5, Lobby 3rd Level

BLACKBOARD TO BENCH TO BLUEPRINT: Defining a National Strategy for Courts and Schools to Engage At-Risk Truant Youth that Builds Capacity and Competency

The progression from truancy to dropout to delinquent behavior is a well established cycle that needs to be broken and attorneys, courts and schools can work to improve results. Attorneys and courts play a critical role in identifying and resolving issues and hold schools accountable for meeting the student's needs. While there are many truancy intervention programs in schools or courts throughout the country, what are the models for success and collaboration that encompass both? How can the legal and the education system work together to communicate a national strategy to engage truant youth that can be replicated and funded? How can these systems eliminate adversarial barriers and work more efficiently to divert at-risk youth from truancy, dropping out and delinquency? What are the best practices to avoid detention or incarceration sanctions and how much do youth and their caregivers know about their rights in truancy contempt proceedings? Join us for an interactive dialogue among attorneys, judges, education system representatives, advocates and youth as we discuss and recommend best practices in these and other areas.

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel • Room: Europe 9, Lobby 3rd Level

NOT ILLEGAL TO BE YOUNG: Using the Law to Protect, Not Punish, At Risk and Homeless Youth

This session will explore best practices using the law to assist youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In this interactive session, participants will include lawyers, lawmakers, law enforcement and others to discuss how best to approach this serious and growing problem. Discussion will include overlap with criminal law, education law, status offenses, housing, public benefits, and other areas of law. Participants are encouraged to identify and share best practices in their community with the expert panel. Free copies of the new ABA publications "Runaway and Homeless Youth and the Law: Model State Statutes" and "Educating Children Without Housing: A Primer on Legal Requirements and Implementation Strategies" will be distributed to attendees.

3:30 – 5:00 pm

Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel • Room: Europe 9, Lobby 3rd Level

Co-Sponsored by the Florida Bar Association

ALONE WITHOUT AN ATTORNEY: Why Doesn't Florida (and Some Other States) Provide Lawyers to All Foster Children?

This session will focus on the proposition that all children in Florida involved in juvenile court proceedings related to their abuse/neglect cases should have an independent court-appointed lawyer, especially after they've been adjudicated as maltreated and placed in state custody (and that this should also happen in the dozen or so other jurisdictions that don't provide these children with legal counsel). There are at least an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 children in Florida's foster care or group care system (i.e., not living with relatives), with as many as 4,000 age ten or older. This session will discuss the importance of children having their own client-directed attorney both in Florida and in other jurisdictions that do not provide children with legal counsel, and the impact of recent changes in federal law. National experts, leaders of the Florida bar, Florida's child welfare agency, stakeholders in Palm Beach County's foster children's project, youth and others will be invited to participate in this dialogue.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

The programs and reception are free. Please RSVP to Amy Horton-Newell at hortona@staff.abanet.org. There is no registration fee for the Midyear Meeting. Attendees can register for the Midyear Meeting several different ways: online at <http://new.abanet.org/calendar/midyear>, by fax, by mail, or on-site at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort.

Join lawyers and advocates from across the country at the ABA Midyear Meeting to discuss innovative strategies to better meet the needs of youth. The programs and reception are free!

Panelists include:

Hon. Ron Alvarez

David Ambroz, *LA City College*

Hon. Bobbe Bridge

Carsandra Buie, *Florida's Children First*

Hon. Joan Byer

Hon. Marguerite Downing

Dr. John Jackson, *Schott Foundation for Education*

Andrea Khoury, *Bar-Youth Empowerment Project*

Mez Pierre, *Florida Youth SHINE*

Dr. Kenneth Seeley, *Center for School Engagement*

Howard Talenfeld, *Florida Bar Legal Needs of Children Committee*

Casey Trupin, *Columbia Legal Services*

Ian Urbina, *New York Times*

John Walsh, *Palm Beach Foster Children's Project*

Terrence Walsh, *Truancy Intervention Program Atlanta*