Tuesday, April 25, 2017

8:30 – 9:15  Continental Breakfast

9:30 – 11:00  Welcomes & Opening Plenary

Professor Martin Guggenheim, JD, New York University School of Law

Rafael Lopez, MPA, Former Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families

11:00 – 11:15  Break

11:15 – 12:45  Workshop A

1. Representing Parents with Disabilities: Strategies & Solutions

- Robyn M. Powell, JD, Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, Brandeis University
- Hon. Marguerite Downing, Los Angeles Superior Court
- Rebecca Cokley, Executive Director of the National Council on Disability

Parents with disabilities face an uphill battle when their fitness as parents has been questioned and their children have been removed. This discussion group, led by an experienced dependency court judge and two experts in the field, will focus on specific case examples, the supports and services clients need, and strategies to successfully advocate for your client in court.
2. Sharing the Story: How to Communicate as Parent Advocates in the Digital Age

**COLOMADE**
- Kathleen Creamer, JD, Community Legal Services
- Hilary Woodward, National Women’s Law Center

This interactive workshop will introduce participants to key strategies for using digital platforms to educate the public, funders, and policy makers on the value of parent advocacy and family preservation. Through case studies and real life examples, participants will learn to use social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to tell a different story about the families involved with child welfare—a story that emphasizes the value of all families and the importance of treating them with dignity and respect.

3. Representing Immigrant Clients: Barriers and Opportunities

**PLAZA**
- Cristina Cooper, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
- Amanda Lauer, JD, Maricopa County Legal Defender’s Office
- Sara Lofland, JD, Office of the Legal Advocate

Parents without legal status in the U.S. often face additional challenges to reunification with their children, including regular case planning and court participation while detained or deported, access to services, and placement of children with relatives. This session will explore common challenges, discuss methods of overcoming those barriers, provide resources to use in individual representation of immigrant parents, and identify often un-explored opportunities, such as recognizing the dependency case as an opportunity for legal relief for a client’s child. Presenters will share tips from practice representing parents and children in Arizona, as well as national trends and resources.

4. Mentoring Advocates and Attorneys New to Parent Defense

**AMBASSADOR**
- Anne Venhuizen, JD, The Bronx Defenders
- Caitlin Becker, MSW, The Bronx Defenders

This workshop focuses on training basics, management of new attorneys and advocates, common mistakes and how to avoid them, and how to support attorneys and advocates who are new to parent defense. This session is geared toward both attorneys and non-attorneys, including those who practice in a holistic organization and those that do not.

5. Implications of the 2016 ICWA Regulations & Guidelines for Parents’ Attorneys

**CONSULATE**
- Scott Trowbridge, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
- Kathy Deserly, Capacity Building Center for Tribes, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
- Sheldon Spotted Elk, JD, Casey Family Programs
- Margaret Burt, JD, Law Office of Margaret Burt

This session will provide an overview of the Indian Child Welfare Act and focus on the aspects of the law most relevant to parents’ attorneys. This will include the history of why the Act was passed and how this recent history may still affect your interaction with clients. Presenters will go into depth regarding the information and clarifications provided by the BIA in 2016 including how ICWA affects standards of proof, criteria for removal, notice, services, and placement decisions.
12:45 – 2:00  Lunch on your own

Please join with your colleagues for the following affinity group lunches. Meet next to registration.

- Urban Practice
- Rural Practice
- Solo Practice
- New to Family Defense
- System Reform
- Veteran Family Defenders
- Managers/ Supervisors
- Legislation
- Self-Care

2:00 – 3:15  Discussion Groups Day 1

Skills: “Please, Judge, I want some more!”/ Getting More for Our Parent Clients through Better Motion Drafting

**PLAZA**
- Andrew Cohen, JD, Committee for Public Counsel Services
- Ann Balmelli O’Connor, JD, Committee for Public Counsel Services

Our parent clients want and deserve more – more visits and more time for visits, more services and more appropriate services, more time to complete treatment, and often more time to prepare for trial. We file motions asking for more, but we usually lose. One of the reasons we lose is because our motions are hard to read. Our motions often don’t tell a compelling story that makes the judge want to grant relief, and they rarely pair that story with a legal argument that convinces the judge that she can grant the relief she wants to grant. We can win more motions and get more for our clients; we just have to raise our game and draft better motions. In this practical skills session on better motion writing for parents’ counsel, attendees will discuss, and then practice: 1. Using plain English. 2. Addressing the requested relief from the get-go (instead of burying it in the middle, leaving it for the conclusion, or forcing the judge to guess). 3. Limiting background/procedural information to the essentials. 4. Telling a story in the motion that reeks of injustice. 5. Crafting a legal argument that convinces the judge she can grant the relief she wants to grant without fear for the child’s safety (or criticism from an appellate court). Better motion drafting is a game changer for parents’ counsel. Attendees will leave this session with new skills and a new way to get more for their clients.


**COLONNADE**
- Carolyn Walther, JD, Center for Family Representation
- Payal Dalal, MSW, Center for Family Representation
- Rick Barinbaum, MSW, Center for Family Representation

This session will introduce participants to counseling techniques that comprise “Motivational Interviewing,” which is uniquely suited to challenging counseling situations including: 1. Clients not following legal advice. 2. Clients disclosing that they have violated court orders. 3. Clients and counsel disagreeing about how to proceed. The session will include an overview of pertinent ethical rules regarding these situations and participants will have the chance to practice various techniques and role play client counseling situations.
3. They Took the Kids and Told Me it was Voluntary: Safety Plans and the Shadow Foster Care System

- Diane Redleaf, JD, Family Defense Center
- Richard Wexler, National Coalition for Child Protection Reform
- Carolyn Kubitschek, Lansner and Kubitschek

This session will focus on federal civil rights decisions that set the legal standard for emergency removal of children and so-called safety plans that separate children from their parents during child protection investigations, including the impact of these family separations in creating a “shadow foster care system.”

4. The Consequences of Conviction: How Criminal, Juvenile, and Dependency Attorneys Work Together to Keep Families Intact

- Erin Lecocq, JD, Infinitum Legal Counsel, P.S., WA
- Cameron Buhl, JD, Infinitum Legal Counsel, P.S., WA
- Hon. Marguerite Downing, Los Angeles Superior Court
- Brenda Robinson, JD, Children’s Law Center of California
- Tyson Nelson, JD, Deputy County Counsel, Monterey Park, CA

Concrete strategies for criminal, juvenile, and dependency attorneys to support their clients with children in order to reduce the likelihood of termination of parental rights, and practice tips to enhance pretrial motions practice and to be more effective at other stages of criminal and dependency proceedings.

5. Looking Beyond Permanency: Maintaining Family Connections Post-Adoption and TPR

- Sarah Lorr, JD, Brooklyn Defender Services
- Stevie Glaberson, JD, Brooklyn Defender Services

This session addresses how parents’ attorneys can help families maintain connections after “permanency” is achieved, including surveying existing legal frameworks for post-adoption contact agreements. We will review social science research supporting long-term connections for biological families and discuss legal changes that might benefit families we serve.

6. Expanding Our Reach: Creating and Managing Effective Pro Bono Partnerships with Law Firms to Deliver Legal Services to Families in the Child Welfare System

- Sara E. Gilloon, JD, The Family Defense Center,
- Emma Ketteringham, JD, The Bronx Defenders
- Marcia Maack, JD, Mayer Brown LLP

This discussion group will focus on how successful pro bono partnerships with major law firms can vastly increase the reach and impact of parent representation agencies. It will cover challenges and keys to success, and also highlight the successful partnerships of the Family Defense Center, the Bronx Defenders, and Mayer Brown.
7. Kinship Discussion Group
   - Heidi Epstein, JD, MSW, ABA Center on Children and the Law
   - Natalie Netzel, JD, Mitchell Hamline School of Law Child Protection Program,

This discussion will focus on how we, as parent attorneys, can advocate for family and kinship placement of children in the foster care system. The focus will be on the benefits and challenges of kinship placements, barriers to foster care licensing of kin such as when individuals who are family or kin to the child are permanently barred from being caregivers based on criminal convictions, and possible solutions.

   - Jacob D’Annunzio, JD, Washington State Office of Public Defense
   - Brett Ballew, JD, Washington State Office of Public Defense

Washington State, like the vast majority of states in the country, faces many hurdles in accomplishing one of the major goals of child welfare cases – reunifying families safely and in a timely manner. Some hurdles are procedural in nature and at times can appear to be difficult to overcome. Participants will learn how cheap, easy, and fast paternity testing has resulted in an increase in children placed with fathers and paternal relatives early in the case. Other results include: money saved in publication fees, early dismissal of cases against alleged fathers – resulting in savings by the parents’ representation program, Court, attorney general, CASA, and the DCFS. Participants will use liberating structures to discover barriers/hurdles in their own systems and begin to design and share solutions that can be accomplished with little to no money and minimal output of time.

9. Engaging Parents with Mental Health Disabilities
   - Carrie Ann Lucas, JD, Disabled Parents Rights
   - Molly Ryan-Kills Enemy, Parent Advocate, Colorado

Attorneys often have difficulty engaging clients with psychiatric disabilities. This session will explore strategies for engaging these clients in their treatment plans, using legal tools for advocacy, avoiding ethical landmines, and helping the clients to be effective members of a team working to reunify the family.

10. Avoiding Termination of Parental Rights in Cases Involving Parents who Suffer with Substance Use Disorder
    - Suzanne Sellers, MPP, MBA, Families Organizing for Child Welfare Justice,
    - Jessica Bryar, JD, Law Office of the Public Defender of Cook County

This discussion will focus on termination of parental rights and permanent guardianship for reason of substance use disorder. The child welfare system often uses this extreme and severe form of punishment against people who use drugs. Both cause undue stress on an already overburdened part of society, those who are poor and minorities.
11. Implementing the Bureau of Indian Affairs ICWA Regulations and Guidelines in Parent Attorney Offices

*SALON II*

- Scott Trowbridge, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
- Margaret Burt, JD, Private NY Attorney and ABA Consultant

This discussion group will focus on how the 2016 federal Regulations and Guidelines can help parent attorney offices better represent any clients covered by the Indian Child Welfare Act. This session will be appropriate as follow up to ICWA preconference or workshop A5 or for those who already have familiarity with ICWA. Facilitators will quickly highlight key provisions that relate to parents’ rights under the law and discussion will focus on how to ensure those provisions are brought from policy to practice. Discussion questions may include training, team building (in or across jurisdictions), tool development, and/or data collection.

12. The Glass is Half Full - Defining the Strategy for the National Alliance on Parent Representation’s Next Decade

*SALON II*

- Mimi Laver, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
- Sue Jacobs, JD, Center for Family Representation

How does the new political landscape impact how our field defines and advocates for increased federal support for Family Defense and child welfare financing reform?

During this session we will discuss: Family Defense as a bi-partisan issue, our role in federal finance reform of foster care, our partners on both sides of the political aisle and how we raise our national profile. Jointly we will ensure the parents’ voice is heard during this uncertain time.

13. Advancing Your Work Through Lesser Known Federal Funding Streams

*AMBASSADOR*

- Radhika Singh Miller, JD, National Legal Aid & Defender Association
- Arielle Altman, MPA, National Legal Aid & Defender Association

Many federal grants that provide support services for low-income people may be used to fund legal services by attorneys representing low-income parents in the child welfare system. Both traditional legal aid programs and private attorneys can apply for federal grants for funding to provide services that help secure access to employment, housing, public benefits, safety from domestic violence, and other factors that contribute to stabilization and reunification. Administered by a broad array of federal agencies, including the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor, these grant programs encourage partnerships to provide holistic services and achieve long-term solutions for low-income individuals and communities. This discussion will highlight grants that are align with the work of attorneys representing parents in the child welfare system, and will feature stories from programs and attorneys who have successfully accessed and implemented this funding.

3:15 – 3:30  **Break**
1. When Due Process for Parents is Long Overdue: Litigating for Meaningful Rights to Notice, to Participate, and to Counsel

- Andrew Cohen, JD, Committee for Public Counsel Services,
- David Meyers, JD, Dependency Legal Services of Northern California

Procedural due process is, at heart, the right to be heard in a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner. That means that parents have a right to meaningful notice, a right to meaningfully participate in the proceedings, a right to fundamentally fair proceedings before an unbiased judge, and, in most jurisdictions, a right to the effective assistance of counsel. Parents are sometimes denied these rights outright; more frequently, the courts and CPS move so quickly (in the interests of cost-savings and/or speedy permanency for children) that these rights are lost or become meaningless. In this session, we will address how trial and appellate counsel for parents can raise due process arguments to ensure that parents: 1. Are served with, and receive, proper notice of the case. 2. Are allowed to participate meaningfully in the case when they don’t speak English. 3. Face an unbiased judge, predictable procedures, and evidentiary decisions based on recognized rules. 4. Receive counsel who is effective and who has the time and discovery to meaningfully prepare for trial. The presenters will address these and many other procedural due process rights that parents are entitled to. They will also address steps trial counsel must take to preserve these issues for appeal and how counsel can set up a case on appeal to expand that jurisdiction’s existing procedural due process rights.

2. Identifying Defenses and Working with Experts in Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma Cases

- Katherine Judson, JD, Wisconsin Innocence Project,
- Jessica Horan-Block, JD, The Bronx Defenders

This workshop will provide attorneys with information and skills to help identify defenses and false testimony when representing parents accused of abusive head trauma of young children and babies. Presenters will take different factual scenarios common to such cases in family court and discuss how to identify possible defenses for trial. Recognizing that attorneys in most cases must often use experts to construct a defense, this workshop will provide practical information on how to identify and work with experts.

3. Implementing New Improved Parent Representation Programs on a Statewide Basis

- Joanne Moore, JD, Washington State Office of Public Defense,
- Amy Miller, JD, Oregon Office of Public Defense Services,
- Melissa Michaelis, JD, Office of the Respondent Parents’ Counsel, Denver, CO

State-funded parents’ representation can be effective, stable, and sustainable. But achieving a new, state-funded program is challenging. Barriers can include creating the political will to change the system and obtaining sufficient funding, among others. This workshop analyzes three successful state-funded programs based on the Right to Counsel.

**AMBASSADOR**
- Hon. Darlene Byrne, 126th Judicial District Court
- Kathleen Creamer, JD, Community Legal Services Family Advocacy Unit
- Melissa Gueller, MS, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges,

This session will cover the key components of the newly Enhanced Resource Guidelines and highlight recommended practices for engaging parents in the dependency court process.

5. Changing Visitation into Family Time

**COLONNADE**
- Alise Hegle, BAS, Children’s Home Society of Washington
- Jey Rajaraman, JD, Legal Services of New Jersey
- Hon. Diana Rugh Johnson, JD, Judge Pro Tem, DeKalb County, GA

We all know that 1 hour of visitation a week, 52 hours in a year, is not enough time to maintain a family connection and prepare for a safe reunification. It is common knowledge that visitation in an office at the child welfare agency leads to cranky children and frustrated parents. What role do parents’ attorneys play to change this model of visitation to productive family time? In this workshop, you will hear from a parent partner about her experience with high quality visitation, a parent attorney who has helped change her state’s practice, and a judge who is implementing her state’s new statute that presumes visits to be unsupervised.

5:15 Reception

**OLD DOMINION**
Thank you to the Ritz for generously providing the food for this event.

Wednesday, April 26

7:45 – 8:30 Coffee Service

8:30 – 10:00 Workshop C

1. Stop Playing Defense: Use of Forensic Social Workers and Other Experts to Help the Court Rule in Your Favor

**AMBASSADOR**
- Jana Heyd, JD, Washington State Office of Public Defense,
- Sonja Ulrich, MSW

This session will instruct on the emerging practice of using defense forensic social workers in the dependency practice area in Washington State. While the use of defense social workers is a routine aspect of dependency representation, the forensic social work practice is a new and bolder step in taking the offensive to zealously advocate for parents in our state.
2. Making the Family Whole: Remedies for Families Whom Protective Services has Wrongfully Separated, Children Who Have Been Wrongfully Taken from Their Families, and Parents Who Have Been Wrongfully Charged and Prosecuted

**Colonade**
- Carolyn A. Kubitschek, JD, Lansner & Kubitschek, New York, NY
- David Lansner, JD, Lansner & Kubitschek, New York, NY

This workshop will discuss remedies – damages, declaratory judgments, and injunctions – for parents and children whose constitutional rights have been violated by child protective services, specifically parents whose children have been wrongfully removed and detained, children who have been wrongfully separated from their parents, and parents who have been wrongfully prosecuted in the family or juvenile court.

3. Volunteer CASA Programs: Rethinking Who Speaks for a Dependent Child’s Best Interests and What Practitioners Can Do to Challenge the Prevailing Narrative

**Plaza**
- Tara Urs, JD, King County Department of Public Defense
- Adam Ballout, JD, ABC Law Group
- Amy Mulzer, JD, Brooklyn Law School

CASA programs have carved out a unique role in the child welfare system that is often in tension with the parent attorney’s advocacy, in part because there is a disconnect between the backgrounds of CASAs and the children for whom they speak. This workshop will start a discussion about how to challenge that disconnect.


**Attaché**
- Aurora Smaldone, JD, Maine Behavioral Healthcare
- Rebecca Brown, LCSW, MSW, Maine Behavioral Healthcare

Experiencing domestic violence has numerous and complex effects on a parent. This presentation will cover the latest research on the impact of domestic violence related to parenting, propose strategies for representing clients impacted by domestic violence within the child welfare system, and explore practical strategies for mitigating the effects of secondary trauma stress when advocating for clients with significant trauma histories.

5. Children as Parents: Effective Advocacy of Expectant and Parenting Youth in the Juvenile Dependency System

**Consulate**
- Rebecca Harkness, JD, Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles
- Susan Abrams, JD, Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles
- Abby Eskin, JD, Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles

Young women in foster care are more than twice as likely as their peers to become pregnant before their 19th birthday. The response of child protective agencies may vary, from efforts at family maintenance and reunification, to almost immediate physical and legal separation of child from parent. This breakout session will examine dependency counsel’s duties to their minor parent.
clients, and offer practical strategies for navigating and prevailing in a world of “children raising children.” We will provide tips on effective advocacy, minor client interview techniques, and discuss tough legal quandaries.

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1. Reasonable Efforts: Holding the Agency Accountable

AMBASSADOR  
- Judge Leonard Edwards, San Francisco, CA

This interactive workshop focuses on the reasonable efforts requirement in federal and state law. It is a problem solving exercise, offering tools to improve outcomes for parents and children in the child welfare system.


ATTACHÉ  
- Clara Presler, JD, The Bronx Defenders  
- Christopher Buerger, JD, MPP, The Bronx Defenders

Parents in child protective proceedings often face concurrent criminal charges, adding new challenges for attorneys and clients. We will address how to navigate some of these challenges, explore possible advantages, and examine how best to empower our clients, enabling them to make educated and informed decisions about their cases.


COLONNADE  
- Michele Cortese, JD, Center for Family Representation  
- Rebecca Horwitz, JD, Center for Family Representation

Join staff from the Center for Family Representation to learn about the menu of programs we developed to educate and attract funders in the private and public sector. These are low cost and relatively easy to begin and have helped CFR raise money and become trusted resources for funders.

4. Easy Come, Easy Go: The Plight of Children who Spend Less Than 30 Days in Foster Care

PLAZA  
- Christopher Church, JD, MM, Children’s Law Center, USC School of Law  
- Vivek Sankaran, JD, University of Michigan School of Law  
- Monique Mitchell, PhD, College of Social Work, USC

This workshop will explore the plight of children who spend less than 30 days in foster care. The data tell us most of these children are removed from their parents and placed in an unfamiliar environment for a week or two before they are returned to their family. The research tells us these children suffer significant trauma during their short stays in foster care. The presenters will explore strategies parent advocates can take to minimize the trauma and potentially prevent these removals.
5. Working with Experts to Advocate for Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

- Amy Mulzer, JD, Brooklyn Law School Disability and Civil Rights Clinic
- Gabriel Freiman, JD, Brooklyn Defender Services Family Defense Practice
- Kelly Sykes, PhD

This workshop will address best practices in the representation of parents with intellectual disabilities in child welfare proceedings, with a focus particularly on working with experts to challenge improper evaluations, obtain proper evaluations, and make individualized and concrete requests for needed accommodations.

11:45 – 12:15   Lunch

12:15 -- 12:45   Seeking Justice from the Bench

- Justice Bridget McCormack, Michigan Supreme Court

12:45 – 1:15   Parents Perspectives on a Just, Safe Court

- Jeanette Vega, Rise Parent Leader
- Nancy Fortunato, Rise Parent Leader
- Jessica Weidmann, JD, Operations Director at Rise

1:15 – 1:30   Break

1:30 – 3:00   Workshop E

1. Challenging Unnecessary Termination of Parental Rights

- Tara Urs JD, King County Department of Public Defense
- Andrew Hoffman, JD, Law Office of Andrew Hoffman

This workshop will provide participants with arguments and tools, including a sample brief, for mounting a constitutional challenge to the termination statute in their jurisdiction. Taking up the argument Prof. Marty Guggenheim presented at the 2015 ABA conference in his keynote speech, the presenters will walk the audience through an argument that termination statutes are unconstitutional both on their face and as applied in various cases, particularly where the child’s placement is likely to disrupt prior to finalizing an adoption. Parents’ advocates will learn how to preserve and advance arguments against this violation of the constitutional right to family integrity.

- Annick Lenoir-Peek, JD, Office of Parent Representation
- Katherine Robertson, LCSW, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy
- Capt. Amy Gavril, MD, Armed Forces Center on Child Protection

This workshop will cover the unique aspects of representing military families. Attorneys will learn how to use the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act and learn about military terms and issues. Information will be provided by the Family Advocacy Program concerning services on base and how they may benefit our clients.

3. Reasonable Efforts and Civil Rights Compliance: Mutually Attainable Goals

- Carla Carter, JD, HHS Office for Civil Rights
- Kevonne Small, JD, PhD, US Department of Justice
- Brandy Wagstaff, JD, US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division

Federal civil rights laws protect children and families from unlawful discrimination in the administration of child welfare programs, activities, and services. This workshop will explore the intersection between ASFA’s provisions requiring “reasonable efforts” to preserve or reunify families and the child welfare system’s obligation to ensure full and equal opportunities for all persons involved in the system.


- Hilary Kushins, JD, Dependency Advocacy Center,
- Julie Butner, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
- Terrence Wilson, JD, MPA, Barton Child Law and Policy Center, Emory School of Law

This session will provide information and tools for parent attorneys to help them understand and advocate for quality substance use disorder treatment for clients. This will include knowing what questions to ask as a parents’ attorney to advocate for both the client and to improve systems, such as what does effective treatment look like, what models show improved outcomes, what are the advantages and challenges in specialized treatment courts, and how to bring best practices to your jurisdiction.

5. Defending Your Clients in the Face of “Medical Diagnosis” of Child Abuse: An Exploration of the Role of “Child Abuse Pediatricians”

- Melissa L. Staas, JD, Family Defense Center
- Mark Freeman, JD, Law Offices of Mark D. Freeman

This workshop will provide a client defense-focused legal and medical framework for understanding the underpinnings of the “child abuse pediatrics” subspecialty. The workshop will discuss tools and strategies for neutralizing the enormous influence the agency’s designated child abuse pediatrician has on the outcome of a case.
3:00 – 3:15   Break

3:15 – 4:30   Discussion Groups Day 2


   **PLAZA**
   - Rich Cozzola, JD, LAF

   This is a hands-on skills session focusing on cross-examination skills for attorneys in child protection cases. The goal of the session is to teach participants to apply an established approach to cross-examination in multiple situations in a child protection case to achieve goals for their parent clients. The session will begin with a description of a basic format for cross-examination and a brief discussion of the importance of linking a witness examination to an overall theory. Participants will then use the cross-examination format in brief factual scenarios that arise in child protection cases, focusing in particular on caseworker testimony, and will receive feedback from the discussion group leaders.


   **COLONNADE**
   - Mary Anne Mendenhall, JD, The Bronx Defenders
   - Emma Ketteringham, JD, The Bronx Defenders
   - Jessica Horan-Block, JD, The Bronx Defenders

   The presenters will give a brief introduction to oral advocacy and advanced trial skills, focusing on language choice, performance aspects, and the art of storytelling. The presenters will divide participants into working groups to work on skill drills using real case examples, giving constructive feedback, and demonstrating persuasive oral advocacy.


   **CONSULATE**
   - Sheri Freemont (Turtle Mountain Chippewa/Omaha) JD, Casey Family Programs
   - Carly Hicks, JD, Mississippi College School of Law, Jackson, MS
   - Addie Smith, JD, MSW, Youth, Rights, and Justice

   Over the past year, parent and child attorneys from across the country have engaged in critical questions: Why, in 2017, is the workforce of child and parent attorneys still so unrepresentative of the diversity of the families we serve? What can we do? How can we come together to move beyond awareness to create real change? This collaborative session will ask for your participation in answering these questions, and offer the opportunity to join in an ongoing, national effort to tackle this essential challenge.
4. The War on Drugs in Child Welfare

- Lisa K. Sangoi, JD, NYU School of Law Family Defense Clinic
- Joyce McMillan, Child Welfare Organizing Project

This discussion group will present the preliminary findings of a joint NYU Law Family Defense Clinic and ACLU Human Rights Project co-authored report on how the child welfare system fails parents and families in its response to allegations of drug use by parents. The facilitators will ask for participants’ feedback on rights violations they are seeing in their jurisdictions, and what, in addition to the report, could be useful to local advocates who want to raise consciousness and push for change on this issue, such as sample op-eds or letters to editors, curriculum guides, etc.

5. “CPS removed my child, but should I attend back to school night?” Parents’ Rights after Removal

- Emily Peeler, JD, MSW, ABA Center on Children and the Law
- David Meyers, JD, Dependency Legal Services of Northern California

Parents of children in foster care are often unsure about their role in their children’s lives. Are they still allowed to visit the school, talk to teachers and school staff, attend IEP meetings, or receive and review report cards? Can they make placement or health decisions? Decide how the child’s hair looks? After a child is removed, parents of children in foster care have the right to make important decisions and play a role in their child’s life. Parents’ attorneys are essential to ensuring parents recognize and exercise these rights. These rights vary by state but generally include the right to participate in education and medical decisions and meetings, determine the child’s religious affiliation, and much more. Join this discussion group to learn practical tips and tools for to help your clients stay involved in their children’s lives.

6. Bridging the Gap: Forging a Positive Relationship between Trial and Appellate Counsel

- Andrew Cohen, JD, Committee for Public Counsel Services
- Leah Lanford, JD, Arkansas Public Defender Commission
- Ruchi Kapoor, Office of Respondent Parents’ Counsel

Participants will discuss cooperative efforts to preserve issues for appeal, client-relations issues, document and information sharing, and dealing with distrust regarding potential ineffective assistance claims. Participants can also raise any other issues they wish regarding appellate issues, writing, or oral argument.
7. When can Parents Let Children be Alone? Labeling Parents Neglectful in an Age of State-Enforced Helicopter Parenting Norms

**BOARDROOM**
- Diane L. Redleaf, JD, Family Defense Center, Chicago, IL
- David Pimentel, JD, University of Idaho Law School
- Danielle Meitiv

This discussion will focus on the growing problem of over-intervention by child protection authorities when parents make the reasonable judgment that their children can be alone for minutes or hours. To introduce the topic, a mother at the center of this controversy, a criminal law professor who has written on over-parenting and “bogeyman” fears, and a family defender who has led appellate and class action litigation to end child protection overreaching will each share their perspectives on this important issue.

8. Parental Rights & the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard: Assessing the Rights of Parents to Direct the Upbringing of Children in Foster Care

**DIRECTORS**
- Daniel Gibbs, JD, MSW, Children’s Law Center, USC School of Law
- Beth Larin, JD, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia

This session will analyze the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of children in foster care, with special attention being given to the constitutional rights of parents and the recent policy landscape ushered in by the “reasonable and prudent parenting standard.” The group will explore strategies for advocates and policymakers.

9. Understanding Complex Trauma and Incorporating Research in Child Welfare Proceedings

**SALON I**
- Julia Hernandez, JD, Brooklyn Defender Services
- Tricia Stephens, PhD, Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, City University of New York

This discussion will look at the ways in which complex trauma affects parents involved in the child welfare system. It will focus on helping parent attorneys understand and identify trauma so they can ensure that their clients receive appropriate diagnoses and meaningful services. It will also explore developing a case theory that can be supported by research in psychology.

10. Moving Mountains: Strategies for Local and Statewide Family Defense Innovation

**FOYER NEAR REGISTRATION**
- Zabrina Aleguire, JD, Alameda County Public Defender’s Office
- Eliza Patten, JD, Alameda County Public Defender’s Office
- Amy Miller, JD, Oregon Office of Public Defense Services

This discussion group will unpack the many challenges of disrupting the status quo to found a family defense organization and highlight successes, recognizing that milestones are measured differently in the start-up phase.

**SALON I**
- S. Colleen. Puckett, Good Legal Firm
- Joanna Woolman, JD, Mitchell Hamline School of Law Child Protection Program

Participants will learn how providing parent support will help parents not only navigate through the system, but also help break down the barrier between parents and their Attorney, the Child Attorney, and the Department. They will also learn how to start support groups in their states.

12. Thriving in the Wilderness: Strategies for the Rural Practitioner

**SALON II**
- Terrence Haas, JD, Alaska Public Defender Agency
- Courtney Lewis, JD, Alaska Public Defender Agency

The goal of this discussion is to provide encouragement and practical advice about how to address the challenges faced by attorneys and advocates working in rural settings. Starting from the perspective of lawyers who practice in the vast road-less Alaskan wilderness, the discussion will emphasize concrete solutions for advocates faced with limited resources assisting clients who are spread across large geographic areas. Plus, you may hear a story or two about small planes, ice roads, and life as a lawyer in the Alaskan bush.

13. Parents’ Perspectives on a Just, Safe Court: Continuing the Conversation

**SALON II**
- Jeanette Vega, Rise Parent Leader
- Nancy Fortunato, Rise Parent Leader
- Jessica Weidmann, JD, Operations Director at Rise

This group will offer a forum for reflection and discussion based on the lunchtime presentation of parents’ perspectives on the court process. Led by parent leaders at Rise, which trains parents to write and speak about their experiences with the child welfare system, this conversation will explore how attorney and court practices may be experienced by parent clients, with a focus on small but meaningful adjustments that can have a big impact on parents’ sense of safety, motivation and worth.

**4:35 – 5:15 Closing Plenary**

**Valuing Respect and Dignity for ALL Families: Where Do We Go From Here?**

**SALON I & II**
- Suzanne Sellers, MPP, MBA, Families Organizing for Child Welfare Justice, Chicago, IL
- Alise Hegle, BAS, Children’s Home Society of Washington
- Mimi Laver, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
Speaker Biographies

Tuesday 10:00am

Martin Guggenheim is the Fiorello LaGuardia Professor of Clinical Law at NYU School of Law where he co-teaches the Family Defense Clinic. He is the co-chair of the American Bar Association’s National Alliance for Parent Representation Steering Committee and a well-known scholar in the area of children and the law.

Rafael López is a Managing Director for Accenture’s Health & Public Service practice in North America. His responsibilities include partnering with decision makers in government, education and nonprofit organization clients to solve some of the toughest challenges facing children, families and communities. His diverse portfolio includes leveraging technology and innovation to shape national strategies for health and human service clients throughout North America. Specifically, Rafael will work across the child support, child welfare, public assistance and public health sub-offerings to identify, develop and deploy innovative offerings.

López joined Accenture in 2017. Previously, he served as the Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, a role to which he was nominated by President Obama and confirmed by the United States Senate. Immediately prior to his confirmation, López served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy within the Executive Office of the President, and with the Domestic Policy Council.
Justice Bridget McCormack is a Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, a position she has held since January 1, 2013. Prior to her election, she was a professor at the University of Michigan Law School in Ann Arbor. She taught criminal law and legal ethics and oversaw the law school's clinical programs as associate dean of clinical affairs. Her academic work focused on practical experience in legal education. Justice McCormack launched and worked in a pediatric advocacy law clinic focusing on children with health problems, and a domestic violence clinic. She is founder of the Michigan Innocence Clinic, the first innocence clinic in the country that exclusively handles non-DNA evidence cases.

Justice McCormack started her legal career in New York, first as trial counsel at the Legal Aid Society and then at the Office of the Appellate Defender. She taught at Yale Law School in New Haven, Connecticut as a Robert M. Cover Fellow from 1997-98. She joined the faculty of the University of Michigan Law School in 1998 and became associate dean of clinical affairs in 2003. Though much of her professional focus has been on matters relating to criminal law, Justice McCormack has long had a special interest in child welfare. She is best known to those in the field of child welfare as the author of a path-breaking 2014 decision by the Michigan Supreme Court. In In re Sanders, 495 Mich. 394 (2014) Justice McCormack, writing for five justices, declared unconstitutional Michigan’s so-called “one-parent doctrine” as an impermissible infringement on the fundamental rights of unadjudicated parents without providing adequate process. The doctrine had been applied for 75 years in Michigan to deny parents who were never charged with neglect of their child the right to raise their child when one of the child’s parents was adjudicated neglectful. The case stands as a testament to the work that can be done to strike down familiar practices in the field of child welfare that cannot survive close scrutiny by courts committed to the rule of law.
5th NATIONAL PARENT ATTORNEY CONFERENCE

April 25-26, 2017

Wednesday 4:35pm

Alis

e Hegle, BAS, is a single parent of one daughter aged 8 years. Her child was removed after birth due to her substance abuse issues. The second time she saw her child was when she was 11 months old. She was facing a possible 7-year prison sentence but instead was given the opportunity to participate in a treatment program. Ms. Hegle eagerly took advantage of this opportunity and was able to successfully reunify with her daughter. Ms. Hegle has been an inspiration to other parents and professionals involved in the child welfare system through her work as a mentor and parent advocate with the King County Superior Courts Parents for Parents Program during the period of 2010 and 2014. Today, Ms. Hegle is the Advocacy Lead for the Office of Innovation and Policy at Children’s Home Society of Washington working to ensure the child welfare birth parent perspective is incorporated in policy, practice and system reform efforts. She provides leadership in the passage of state legislation and most recently assisted in the development, coordination and advocacy of SB5486, The Parents for Parents Program bill, and manages the research and implementation of that program. Ms. Hegle also coordinates the Parent Ally work in Washington State and is passionate about ensuring the most disenfranchised populations in her community have a voice. Additionally, Ms. Hegle serves on national, state and local committees including the Children’s Administration’s Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee and the Birth Parent National Network. She was recognized as a National Reunification Hero by the ABA Center on Children and the Law and was also a Transforming Lives Award nominee. Her background of prior homelessness, and juvenile, criminal and child welfare system involvement, provide expertise in her system advocacy efforts. However, her greatest joy is raising her daughter who is thriving and who reminds her that every day is a precious gift.

Suzanne Sellers is a passionate advocate for the reform of the child welfare system and the mother of two adult children, ages 23 and 21 years. Suzanne suffered from substance use disorder and in her parental rights were terminated, although she had been drug and alcohol free for over two years at the time. In September 2017, Suzanne will celebrate 20 years of freedom from drug and alcohol usage. She reunified with her children when they each turned 18. Her experience made her an advocate and gave her a purpose to help families be reunified and have the justice they deserve. Suzanne is the Founder and Executive Director of Families Organizing for Child Welfare Justice. FOCWJ exists to train, educate and organize families in child welfare reform. In addition to her work with FOCWJ, Suzanne is a member of a number of professional groups including the IL-7th Congressional District Public Policy Working Group on Child Welfare and Women’s Issues and the Casey Family Programs Birth Parent Advisory Committee. She also travels the globe, visiting organizations in other countries that advocate for the reunification of children and families. She was a volunteer parent advocate at the Family Defense Center, a leader in its Parent Empowerment Program, and on FDC’s Board of Directors. Suzanne speaks and presents nationally including the Child Welfare Braintrust of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services 10th Annual Birth Parent Summit in Chicago, on a radio program in Chicago, and at a workshop at the 4th National Parent Attorney Conference. Suzanne was honored to be recognized as a 2015 National Reunification Day Hero by the ABA Center on Children and the Law. Suzanne also consults as a Procurement Manager at a firm in the Chicago area. Suzanne considers it her life’s work to advocate for families, using her personal experience in the child welfare system and her experience with substance use disorder to inform her advocacy.
Susan Abrams has been representing youth in the California foster care system for the past ten years. In 2005, Susan implemented an Equal Justice Works fellowship project at Children’s Law Center of California aimed at reducing the rate of dependent youth entering the juvenile justice system. Following her fellowship, Susan worked as a Staff Attorney representing children in all aspects of dependency proceedings in Los Angeles Superior Court. Since October 2013, Susan has served as the Policy Director, advocating at the state and local level to ensure the best outcomes for children in foster care.

Zabrina Aleguire currently practices as a court-appointed attorney for parents and children in San Francisco. Together with Eliza Patten, Zabrina is co-founding a Family Defense Pilot at the Alameda County Public Defender’s Office. She formerly represented parents in New York at Brooklyn Defenders' Family Defense Practice. Her current legislative and policy efforts are aimed at translating the importance of family defense to the CA state legislature. For the past two years, Zabrina taught Juvenile Law at University of San Francisco Law School.

Arielle Altman is senior program associate for NLADA’s Civil Legal Aid Initiative, and administers NLADA’s Resource Desk, which provides technical assistance to legal aid programs forging partnerships on federal grant programs.

Brett Ballew is a managing attorney for the Washington State Office of Public Defense Parents Representation Program. Before his current employment, Brett was appointed for just about every type of case for which an attorney can be appointed, in every type of court in the state, including the representation of parents in dependency and termination cases from 1996 to 2007. He has been involved in reform of the child welfare system on both the local and state level and spoken on the virtue of high quality parents representation around the country. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Washington and his law degree from the University of Montana.

Adam Ballout is a Seattle native and alumni of the University of Washington and the Seattle University School of Law. During law school, Adam clerked for the Chief Judge of the Suquamish tribe before joining the successful firm of Richard Okrent. Adam has been a dedicated and successful trial litigator of dependency, adoption, administrative law, and personal injury cases which have including several high profile cases garnering national media attention. Currently serving clients in Snohomish, King and Skagit counties, the ABC Law Group is a dedicated, experienced firm with a strong professional reputation and a passion for social justice. Adam’s commitment to advocating for system reform and the reunification of families has led to a focus on dealing with complex contested child abuse and child custody issues.

Ann Balmelli O’Connor has handled appeals in child welfare matters for over 25 years, first for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families and, since 2011, for the Committee for Public Counsel Services Children and Family Law (CAFL) Division. She founded CAFL’s in-house appellate unit in 2012, and serves as its Attorney-in-Charge. She trains and supervises CAFL appellate staff attorneys, trains and supports CAFL trial staff attorneys and private trial and appellate attorneys, and oversees interlocutory appeals handled by CAFL staff. She is a graduate of Suffolk University Law School.

Rick Barinbaum, LMSW is Co-Director of the Center for Family Representation's Queens office and a Social Work Supervisor. Rick earned a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Political Science from Arizona State University in 2001 and a Master’s degree in Social Work from Hunter in 2007, with a fellowship through the Child Welfare Fund. Rick has a background of working with children and families in a variety of capacities over the last 10 years before joining CFR in 2007. Rick has also taught Social Welfare Policy as an Adjunct Professor at the Hunter College School of Social Work.
Caitlin Becker is the supervising social worker in the Family Defense Practice at The Bronx Defenders. Caitlin earned her M.S.W. from Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service in 2010. Prior to joining The Bronx Defenders, Caitlin worked with undergraduates at Fordham University's Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice. She served as a Jesuit volunteer and worked with homeless youth in San Diego, California, following her graduation from Boston College in 2005 with a degree in English and Communication Studies.

Rebecca Brown is a Clinical Manager at Maine Behavioral Healthcare in Portland, Maine. A licensed clinical social worker, she oversees the clinical operations of several federally funded projects, including the Defending Childhood Initiative. Her experience includes direct clinical practice, training, supervision, implementation, and dissemination of evidence-based practices and treatment models. She is recognized nationally as an expert on the impact of trauma. She is one of the lead authors on two National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) products aimed at supporting children exposed to family violence. She also co-chairs the NCTSN’s Domestic Violence Collaborative Workgroup, aiming to improve the quality of support and care available to children, youth, and families affected by domestic violence. Additionally, Ms. Brown has provided technical assistance to Futures Without Violence, Battered Women’s Justice Project, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges on various trauma-related topics. She has previously presented at the National Child Traumatic Stress Network All Network Conference, the National Health and Domestic Violence Conference, and the National Summit on Preventing Youth Violence.

Jessica Bryar is Chief of the Civil Division of the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender. Jessica’s division represents indigent individuals in the Child Protection and Mental Health divisions of the Circuit Court of Cook County. She oversees 35 employees and an annual budget of approximately $3.4 million. She serves on the American Bar Association’s National Alliance for Parent Representation Steering Committee and Illinois Department of Children and Family Service’s Cook County Transformation Team. She is a current fellow at the University of Chicago’s Civic Leadership Academy. Jessica received her J.D. from Loyola University Chicago School of Law and B.A. from Boston College.

Christopher Buerger arrived at the Bronx Defenders Family Defense Practice in 2016, having already spent six years fighting on behalf of indigent parents in family court at the Center for Family Representation. He is a graduate of Columbia Law School, where he was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar and a member of the Human Rights Clinic. Chris received an M.P.P from Oregon State University, focusing on quantitative methods and child welfare policy. He completed his undergraduate studies at American University in 2005 with a major in literature and a minor in chemistry.

Cameron Buhl is an attorney focusing on dependency defense cases for incarcerated parents. Cameron graduated cum laude from Seattle University School of Law, where he represented incarcerated parents in child welfare cases in the Incarcerated Parents Advocacy Clinic. His experience there ignited his passion for advocating for incarcerated parents facing unique challenges in their dependency cases as a result of criminal charges and convictions. Cameron has since conducted trainings for students and attorneys about how to work with incarcerated parents in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. He also sits on the Coalition for Children of the Incarcerated and volunteers at the Washington Corrections Center for Women providing legal advice to incarcerated mothers involved in dependency proceedings. Cameron and his partner, Erin Lecocq, recently co-founded Infinitum Legal Counsel, a non-profit law firm in Washington State, serving moderate means, low-income, and marginalized communities.
Margaret A. Burt is an attorney in private practice in Rochester, New York. For thirty seven years she has specialized in the representation of children, adults and child welfare agencies in trial court and appellate practice. A substantial amount of her practice involves consulting and training for lawyers, judges, caseworkers and service providers all around the country in the areas of child abuse and neglect, permanency for foster children, the termination of parental rights, and adoptions. She provides national and local training on such issues as the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Indian Child Welfare Act, confidentiality, legal ethics in child welfare, the representation of children and trial techniques. She also consults on legislation connected to child welfare issues.

Julie Butner is a Child Law Policy Fellow at the ABA Center on Children and the Law in partnership with Barton Child Law and Policy Center. After graduating from Northeastern University School of Law, she served as an AmeriCorps Attorney in a women’s homeless shelter in Boston. While at Northeastern, she worked at the Children’s Law Center of Massachusetts and also as a public defender, DV advocate, and human rights fellow in DC and New Delhi, India. Julie earned degrees in History and Criminal Justice at George Washington University and worked at Friendship Place in DC before attending law school.

Hon. Darlene Byrne has served as Judge of the 126th Judicial District Court in Travis County (Austin), Texas since 2001. Prior to serving on the bench, she practiced law for thirteen years in the areas of employment, commercial and governmental entity litigation. A graduate of the University of Houston Law Center, Judge Byrne serves as Vice Chair to the Supreme Court of Texas’ Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families, as well as the past Chair of the Data Subcommittee for this Commission. Judge Byrne is a member of the Travis County Juvenile Justice Board, a founding team member of the Travis County Family Drug Treatment Court, and a co-chair for the Austin Do The Write Thing Challenge. She is the 2005 recipient of the Government Service Award presented by the Travis County Women Lawyers’ Association. Judge Byrne was recently the honored for the prestigious 2015 National CASA Association Judge of the Year award for her extraordinary work presiding over cases dealing with parental custody, substance abuse and child safety. Under her leadership, the Travis County child protection courts were named a model court in 2009, and since then, she has used the model to improve the system for children and families by examining data and applying it to common-sense solutions for children.

Carla Carter is a Civil Rights Analyst in the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Carter is responsible for oversight of OCR’s Child Welfare Initiative, a federal interagency workgroup with the U.S. Department of Justice and the HHS Children’s Bureau that promotes civil rights compliance in the child welfare field. Ms. Carter develops civil rights policy, provides technical assistance to state and local child welfare agencies, and trains child welfare stakeholders on the intersection of child welfare and federal civil rights law. Ms. Carter is a member of the New York State bar.

Christopher Church is the Law and Policy Director at the Children's Law Center at the USC School of Law. At the center, he supervises a small team of researchers and conducts independent research on child protective services and foster care. Christopher consults with a number of state child welfare agencies, non-profit organizations, and the federal government on improving outcomes for children and families involved in civil child abuse and neglect proceedings. Christopher holds a Masters in Mathematics from the University of North Texas and a Juris Doctor from Gonzaga University School of Law. He completed his undergraduate studies at Concordia College in New York. Christopher is licensed to practice law in Georgia and South Carolina. He lives in Columbia with his wife, Amanda, and their two dogs, Frances & Willene.
Andrew Cohen has represented parents and children for the Committee for Public Counsel Services Children and Family Law (CAFL) Division in Massachusetts since 1995. In his current position as CAFL Director of Appellate Panel, he trains and supervises 130 private appellate attorneys. He also trains and provides support to about 800 private trial attorneys. He has argued many appeals before the Massachusetts appellate courts and regularly files amicus curiae briefs on his agency’s behalf. He has authored several articles and book chapters on evidence, parent representation, and child welfare trial and appellate practice. Mr. Cohen, a graduate of Harvard College and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, currently serves on the Steering Committee for the American Bar Association’s National Alliance for Parent Representation.

Rebecca Cokley is the Executive Director of the National Council on Disability, an independent agency charged with advising Congress and the White House on issues of national disability public policy. She joined NCD in 2013 after serving 4 years in the Obama Administration. Most recently, she was the Special Assistant to the Principal Deputy at the Administration for Community Living at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Before serving at the Administration on Community Living, Cokley was the Director of Priority Placement for Public Engagement in the Presidential Personnel Office at the White House where she was responsible for outreach to diversity and minority organizations to recruit qualified individuals for roles in the Obama Administration. Prior to her time at the White House, Cokley was the Confidential Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. She participated in the Education Policy Fellowship Program in 2006 and worked at the Institute for Educational Leadership for five years, building a number of tools and resources designed to empower and educate youth with disabilities and their adult allies. She has spent the last 15 years engaging in discussions tied to civil rights and equity while paying particular attention to the needs of young people with disabilities. In 2015 she was inducted into the inaugural class of the Susan M. Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame and was the recipient of the Frank Harkin Memorial Award by the National Council on Independent Living. Rebecca has a B.A in Politics from the University of California Santa Cruz.

Cristina Ritchie Cooper is Senior Counsel with the ABA Center on Children and the Law. As co-director of the Center’s Immigration Project, she provides guidance for attorneys representing immigrant children and parents in the dependency system, and shares promising practices for courts and child welfare agencies working with immigrant families. Cristina is also a liaison with the Children’s Bureau’s Capacity Building Center for Courts to help Court Improvement Programs identify their priorities and achieve their goals. Prior to joining the ABA, Cristina represented children and youth in dependency cases in the Bronx, NY, and represented youth in protection order and family law matters in Washington, DC.

Michele Cortese, Esq. was named the Executive Director of the Center for Family Representation (CFR) in January of 2016. She joined CFR as Deputy Director in 2002. Ms. Cortese supervised the development of CFR's interdisciplinary model of representation that serves 2000 parents annually in dependency and termination proceedings in New York City. Ms. Cortese has personally conducted more than 175 training sessions, and has presented or provided TA to practitioners from 16 states; she has written for the ABA's Center on Children and the Law. She is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Alliance for Parent Representation. Ms. Cortese is a graduate of Columbia University School of Law and Colgate University.

Richard Cozzola is the Director of the Children and Families Practice Group at LAF in Chicago, Illinois, the largest provider of legal services to the poor in Chicago. He has represented parents, children, and relatives in Juvenile Court and education matters for over thirty years. He supervises attorneys who work on cases in child welfare, domestic violence, custody, juvenile expungements, and education. His appellate litigation helped establish a burden of proof for the best interest stage of termination of parental rights hearings in Illinois, challenged fraudulent adoptions, and supported the suppression of involuntary juvenile confessions. He is the former Program Director of the Civitas Childlaw Center at Loyola Chicago School of Law. He has been a
faculty member for trial skills programs sponsored by the NITA, and has conducted trainings for attorneys and other professionals across the country. He has written on a number of topics including working with social workers in a legal setting and effective trial strategies in child welfare cases. Richard is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Alliance for Parent Representation.

**Kathleen Creamer** is the Managing Attorney of the Family Advocacy Unit at Community Legal Services, which represents parents in all stages of dependency proceedings, including adjudication, permanency reviews, termination of parental rights trials and appeals. She joined CLS as a staff attorney in the Family Advocacy Unit in 2006. She recently served as a Stoneleigh Foundation Fellow dedicated to Improving Reunification Outcomes for Children of Incarcerated Parents. Ms. Creamer also led the coalition that developed and lobbied for the successful passage of the 2010 Healthy Birth for Incarcerated Women Act, which curtailed the practice of shackling incarcerated women during childbirth in Pennsylvania’s jails and prisons. Ms. Creamer earned her J.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law. She received her B.A. at St. Mary’s College of Maryland. Ms. Creamer is the recipient of the 2011 Women’s Way Unsung Heroine Award and was recognized as a 2012 Legal Intelligencer Lawyer on the Fast Track. Ms. Creamer is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Alliance for Parent Representation.

**Jacob D’Annunzio** is a managing attorney of the Parents Representation Program at the Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD). Jacob began his career as a public defender at the Skagit County Public Defender. Here, besides working with juvenile and dependency cases, he was involved in creating the Family Treatment Court, working towards increasing visitation available for families, and working toward a foster mentor program. Prior to joining the team at OPD, Jacob worked at the Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA) providing training and support to attorneys and judges working in dependency and termination cases.

**Payal Dalal**, LMSW, is currently the Manager of Human Resources at the Center for Family Representation. She was previously the Co-Director & Social Work Supervisor of CFR’s Queens practice and joined the organization in 2008. Ms. Dalal was previously the Associate Director of Fordham University’s Interdisciplinary Center for Family & Child Advocacy, where she worked with advocates to develop best practices around issues affecting at-risk children and families. Ms. Dalal also worked for the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) as a child protective specialist and later as Director of Circle of Support, a network of community-based support groups for foster and adoptive parents in NYC.

**Kathy Deserly** serves as the TLPI Project Director for the Capacity Building Center for Tribes. Kathy has worked in the field of Indian child welfare for more than thirty years, beginning as Assistant Director of Indian Child and Family Services, a foster and adoption agency, in Southern California where she spent twelve years. She later worked as a technical assistance specialist for the National Indian Child Welfare Association. Kathy served as Indian Child Welfare Specialist for the State of Montana from 1996-2000. In 2004 Kathy became a founding board member of the Indian Child and Family Resource Center (ICFRC) based in Helena, Montana, a training and technical assistance center for Tribal social service programs, private providers and state agencies. Kathy spent ten years as an independent child welfare consultant prior to joining the Tribal Law and Policy Institute in 2009 where she served as the Associate Director and later as Director of the National Resource Center for Tribes from 2009-2014.

**Hon. Marguerite Downing** is a judge on the Superior Court of Los Angeles, CA. Appointed August 21, 2007, Judge Downing currently presides over a dependency law calendar. Prior to her appointment, Judge Downing worked as a Deputy Public Defender for over 18 years representing both juveniles and adults charged with crimes ranging from trespass to murder cases. She is a graduate of the University of West Los Angeles School of Law and Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. Judge Downing chairs an Incarcerated Parents Working Group Committee for the Los Angeles Superior Court which looks at barriers preventing incarcerated
parents (former and current) from reuniting with their children who are subjects of dependency actions. As a result of the committee’s work, Judge Downing has presented trainings throughout California and beyond on “what constitutes reasonable efforts” in servicing these parents. She has also co-taught the weeklong statewide training, Dependency Law Overview for judicial officers assigned to Dependency. Judge Downing has also spoken on other dependency and law related matters in such place far flung places as Dubai, Saipan, Guam and Beijing, China. She is also Chair of the ABA Commission on Youth at Risk, and serves as their liaison to the Commission on Disability Rights.

**Hon. Leonard Edwards** is a retired Superior Court Judge now working as a consultant and teacher. He provides technical assistance to the courts of California and courts across the country, particularly in areas involving children and families. Judge Edwards served for 26 years as a Superior Court Judge in Santa Clara County, California. He sat as a domestic relations judge and as a juvenile court judge. He also served for six years as Judge-in-Residence with the Center for Families, Children & the Courts, a division of the California Judicial Council. During his judicial career, Judge Edwards founded and was the first president of the Juvenile Court Judges of California, was founder of the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council, was founder of Kids In Common, and founder of the Child Advocates of Santa Clara County. Judge Edwards was the President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in 2002-2003. Judge Edwards has taught at the University of Santa Clara Law School, Stanford Law School, and the California Judicial College. He has provided judicial trainings in over 48 states and 12 foreign countries. Judge Edwards has written widely and has received many awards. He was the recipient of the 2004 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence.

**Heidi Redlich Epstein** is the Director of Kinship Policy and the Assistant Director of State Projects at the ABA Center on Children and the Law. In her role as Director of Kinship Policy Heidi helped develop and currently co-manages the Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center at [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org) in partnership with Casey Family Programs and Generations United. She provides training and technical assistance on kinship issues, and helped develop the National Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards. As Assistant Director of State Projects, Heidi co-manages the award winning Permanency Barriers Project, where she provides technical assistance and legal training to judges, attorneys, and social service professionals. Prior to her work at the ABA, Heidi was a Law Guardian for Legal Aid of Maryland and a residential social worker in upstate New York. She earned her B.S. from Binghamton University and her J.D. and M.S.W. from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

**Abby Eskin** has been representing youth in the Los Angeles County foster care system for the past eleven years at the Children’s Law Center of California (CLC). Ms. Eskin started as a CLC Staff Attorney representing hundreds of children in all aspects of dependency proceedings. For the past five years, she has been a Supervising Attorney, providing day-to-day training, support, and supervision to attorneys. She represents CLC in multiple inter-agency workgroups devoted to policy and legal changes and improved outcomes for expectant and parenting youth in the foster care system. In addition, Abby provides specialized expertise, trial strategy and direction to attorneys representing teen parents. Abby has presented on the challenges of representing Non Minor Dependents with developmental disabilities, mental illness and competency issues at the 2016 NACC Conference, 2015 "Beyond the Bench," 2015 Los Angeles County "Partnership Conference", as well as in-house at CLC. Prior to joining CLC Abby clerked for the Honorable George King, United States District Court Central District of California. Abby is an NACC Certified Child Welfare Law Specialist and a graduate of Colby College and UCLA School of Law.

**Nancy Fortunato** is a Parent Leader at Rise, Parent Advocate at JCCA and graduate of the Child Welfare Organizing Project who joined Rise's Leadership Team in 2015. Nancy completed Rise's Public Speaking Skills Training and Advanced Public Speaking workshops, as well as their Advanced Writing Workshop and Reporting Group.
Mark D. Freeman received his B. S. in mechanical engineering from Penn State University in 1983 before running his own business for 13 years. Mark received his J.D. from Temple University School of Law in 1999 and began an elder law practice. In 2008, Mark defended his first child abuse case when a personal friend was charged with shaking his 2 month-old. Mark has represented dozens of parents and caretakers against false allegations of abuse in criminal and family courts in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, he has successfully prosecuted multiple civil rights suits on behalf of falsely accused parents.

Sheri Freemont (Turtle Mountain Chippewa/Omaha) is a Senior Director with Casey Family Programs in the Indian Child Welfare Unit, where she focuses on providing technical support to state and tribal jurisdictions to improve outcomes for tribal children and families in child welfare systems, as well as supporting the Indian Child Welfare Act practices in national projects and state forums. Ms. Freemont, an attorney, previously served as the Director of the Family Advocacy Center, Chief Prosecutor for the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and a family violence and felony child abuse prosecutor for Maricopa County, Arizona.

Gabriel Freiman is a Supervising Attorney with the Family Defense Practice of Brooklyn Defender Services. He joined the Family Defense Practice in 2007, and has been a supervising attorney since 2012. Gabe graduated from NYU School of Law magna cum laude and Order of the Coif in 2006. At NYU, Gabe was a Root·Tilden·Kern and Sinsheimer Service Scholar and won the Ann Petluck Poses prize for outstanding work in a clinical practice. After law school, Gabe clerked for the Honorable Jon D. Levy of the Maine Supreme Court.

CAPT Amy Gavril, MC, USN is assigned to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland as a child abuse pediatric subspecialist. Dr. Gavril is a dual board certified in pediatrics and child abuse pediatrics and specializes in child abuse evaluations. She is the most senior active duty medical consultant for child abuse and neglect in the Uniformed Services worldwide. She has extensive experience and training in the field of child physical and sexual abuse, child neglect, child fatalities, as well as pediatric and adolescent gynecology. Dr. Gavril serves as a medical consultant to social services, medical, legal, and investigative agencies within the Department of Defense and civilian community for cases of suspected child maltreatment, as well as child pornography evaluations -- including medical-legal case reviews, expert testimony, training, and education.

Daniel Gibbs, M.S.W., J.D., is the Child Law Fellow at the Children’s Law Center at the USC School of Law. As the Child Law Fellow, Daniel conducts research on issues related to child welfare and juvenile justice, working primarily in the topic areas of foster youth permanency and child welfare policy. He holds a Masters in Social Work and a Juris Doctor from the University of Georgia, and graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy.

Sara E. Gilloon is a Staff Attorney and the Pro Bono Program Coordinator at the Family Defense Center. Ms. Gilloon received her J.D., with high distinction, from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2008. She received her B.A. in Economics and Spanish, summa cum laude, from the University of Notre Dame. She has represented parents in all aspects of child welfare investigations and litigation. She also speaks Spanish proficiently, which allows FDC to expand its reach. Before joining FDC in 2014, Ms. Gilloon was a litigation attorney at Winston & Strawn, where she did extensive pro bono work.

Stephanie “Stevie” Glaberson joined Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS) in September 2014 after serving as a law clerk to the Honorable Frank Maas in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. Stevie received her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and her J.D. from NYU. During law school, Stevie
interned with the family defense practice and The Door, and participated in the NYCLU and Federal Defender Clinics. Stevie also served as an editor on NYU’s Law Review. Prior to law school, Stevie worked on child welfare issues with a Seattle non-profit. Stevie speaks Spanish and is a third-generation Brooklynite.

**Melissa D. Gueller**, M.S. is the Program Director for Child Abuse and Neglect at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Ms. Gueller has gained a great deal of knowledge about child abuse and neglect issues through her work as an advocate for domestic violence victims and their children, her extensive work in juvenile justice, as well as through her work with chronically mentally ill adults involved in the criminal justice system. As a former Model Court Liaison and Senior Program Manager, and in her current position as the Program Director of Child Abuse and Neglect, Ms. Gueller works closely with courts handling child abuse and neglect cases nationwide, to facilitate systems change through the provision of technical assistance, consultation, research, and evaluation. Ms. Gueller has a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Human Services, and a Master’s of Science Degree in Forensic Psychology.

**Terrence Haas** is a supervising attorney for the Alaska Public Defender Agency in Bethel Alaska. The Bethel office covers a largely road-less region of Southwest Alaska comparable in size to Washington State and covering over 50 villages and settlements along the Bering Sea and Yukon/Kuskokwim rivers. The Bethel region includes 58 federally recognized tribes and a population that is majority Native Alaskan. Mr. Haas has lived and worked in Bethel for 8 years, and handles both criminal and civil cases, including parental representation in many child welfare cases governed by ICWA. Before moving to Alaska Mr. Haas clerked for Chief Justice Frank J. Williams at the Rhode Island Supreme Court immediately after graduating with a J.D. from Roger Williams School of Law where he was editor-in-chief of his school’s only law review.

**Rebecca Harkness** is an attorney with nine years’ experience in Dependency Law. Rebecca began her law career at Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers representing parents in the dependency system. There she wrote numerous writ petitions on behalf of parents, orally arguing several petitions in District Two of the California Court of Appeal. Rebecca recently accepted a position as staff attorney and assistant writ attorney at Children's Law Center. She helped to write and pass California bills making it easier for parents engaged in in-patient drug programs to maintain custody of their children, as well as a bill that allows minor parents to be granted extended reunification services beyond the normal timelines.

**Michael Heard** has been the managing social worker with the Washington State Office of Public Defense's (OPD) Parents Representation Program since 2006. He is also a contracted federal consultant for Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). Before joining OPD, Mr. Heard worked for Washington State's Children's Administration as an administrator responsible for three counties. He has experience in child welfare quality assurance, CPS supervisor, CPS social worker and Indian child welfare social worker. Mr. Heard has an undergraduate degree in sociology from the University of Utah and an MSW from the University of Minnesota.

**Julia Hernandez** is a Staff Attorney in the Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. She received her B.A. in Anthropology from SUNY New Paltz. She is a graduate from CUNY Law School where she participated in the Immigrant and Non-Citizen’s Rights Clinic and the Suspension Representation Project. Prior to joining the Family Defense Practice, Julia worked with non-citizens as they fought deportation in U.S. Immigration Court.

**Jana Heyd** is a program managing attorney with the Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD) in the Parent Representation Program. Prior to joining OPD in 2015, Ms. Heyd was the assistant director at SCRAP (now King County Department of Public Defense-SCRAP Division) one of the 4 non-profit public defense firms in Seattle. She worked there for 24 years, primarily focused on the dependency practice area. Ms. Heyd is the co-chair of the Washington State Bar Association's Juvenile Law Section.
Carlyn Hicks, Senior Staff Attorney and Clinical Adjunct Professor at Mission First Legal Aid Office at Mississippi College School of Law, has spearheaded efforts to make Parent Representation in Child Welfare cases a reality for Mississippi families. As clinical director for the Child Welfare and Family Justice Clinic, she provides supervision, instruction, and training to third year law students interested in learning hands-on experience and gaining skill development in family defense. Carlyn is actively involved in the leadership of the Mississippi Bar Association in varying capacities and is Chairman of the Mississippi Bar’s Child Welfare and Child Advocacy Committee.

Andrew Hoffman is an attorney in private practice at the Law Office of Andrew Hoffman in Boston. Prior to opening his own practice, he was employed as an attorney with the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) for over 15 years, the last 9 as the Managing Attorney of the Boston office of the Children and Family Law Division. Before that, he practiced law with civil legal services programs for about 5 years in a variety of fields. Most of Andrew’s experience has been in the trial courts, but he also has vast experience in appellate matters, administrative advocacy, and other forums. He teaches, writes, and trains other attorneys. Andrew is a graduate of Princeton University and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

Jessica Horan-Block is a supervising attorney in the Family Defense Practice at The Bronx Defenders where she has represented parents in abuse and neglect cases since 2011. Ms. Horan-Block has represented several parents faced with charges of physical abuse based on findings of head injury and alleged broken bones. Since 2015, Ms. Horan-Block has served on the faculty of Bronx Defenders trial skills training program Defenders’ Academy. Jessica Horan-Block graduated from Temple University Beasley School of Law and received her B.A. from Barnard College.

Rebecca Horwitz, Manager Government and Community Affairs, joined the Center for Family Representation in 2009. She was a staff attorney in both Manhattan and Queens and was promoted to a Senior Staff position in 2011. In 2013, she joined CFR's Development team. She currently manages more than $1 million in government contracts and shepherds the development of new initiatives. She frequently does community based presentations, and presentations for both private and government funders on the child welfare and family court system. She maintains regular contact with city and state officials and their staff and works on legislation, testimony and policy. She is a graduate of New York Law School.

Susan Jacobs, Esq., is the founding Executive Director of the Center for Family Representation (CFR) and now serves as CFR’s Special Counsel. Ms. Jacobs started CFR in 2002 building it from a staff of 2 and budget of $250,000 to a staff of 85 and a budget of $8 million. CFR serves over 1,800 indigent families annually in NYC and provides training and technical assistance to jurisdictions and states around the country in its unique interdisciplinary model of strengthening families whose children are at risk of foster care placement. She is currently the manager of a unique study of legal representation of parents conducted by New York University Law School and supported by Casey Family Programs. Ms. Jacobs is the co-chair of the American Bar Association’s (ABA) National Alliance for Parent Representation Steering Committee. She has been appointed to numerous Family Court and child welfare advisory boards in New York City including the Mayor’s Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board, the New York City Executive Committee on Child Welfare and the Administration for Children’s Services Commissioner’s Task Force. Ms. Jacobs represented adults and children in Family Court, New York State Supreme Court and in Federal Court. She has been recognized with several awards including from the Center on Children and the Law of the ABA, the New York State Bar Association, and Brooklyn Law School. Ms. Jacobs earned a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School, an M.S. in Special Education from the University of North Carolina and a B.S. from Cornell University.
**Diana Rugh Johnson** holds a MS in Biochemistry from Clemson University and a JD from the Georgia State University College of Law. She serves as a Judge Pro Tempore in the Juvenile Court of DeKalb County and was one of the first attorneys in Georgia to be certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist. Diana is on the Steering Committee of the ABA National Alliance for Parent Representation and the Board of Directors of the Georgia Association of Counsel for Children. Her private practice focuses on Guardian Ad Litem work, adoptions, SSI, disability, and appeals. Diana teaches other child welfare attorneys in Georgia and across the United States on a variety of topics including trial skills, effective case planning, understanding drug tests, and due diligence in medically-complicated cases.

**Katherine Judson** is the SBS/AHT Litigation Coordinator at the Wisconsin Innocence Project, where she engages in training, consulting, and direct representation of clients in cases involving wrongful convictions of child abuse. She previously served as the Innocence Network Shaken Baby Syndrome Litigation Fellow. Ms. Judson began her legal career with the New Mexico Public Defender Department, where she specialized in felony cases, especially those with complicated scientific evidence. She has spoken before the American Academy of Forensic Science, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and other organizations on topics related to forensic science and the law.

**Ruchi Kapoor** graduated from the University of Colorado Law School in 2010 and subsequently clerked for the Denver Juvenile Court, igniting a passion for child welfare law. After clerking, she spent three years in private practice solely devoted to appellate and post-conviction work, and honed her ability to do dependency and neglect appeals. Ruchi has been a frequent trainer on appellate topics in juvenile contexts, and is passionate about helping parents receive adequate appellate representation.

**Emma S. Ketteringham** is the Managing Attorney of the Family Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders. She supervises attorneys, social workers, and parent advocates who represent accused parents facing possible termination of parental rights. She was previously the Director of Legal Advocacy for National Advocates for Pregnant Women. She also worked in private practice at both Lansner & Kubitschek and Paul Weiss. She clerked in the U.S. District Court in Maine and in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Emma earned a B.A. in Political Science from Trinity College and a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law.

**Carolyn A. Kubitschek**, a partner at Lansner and Kubitschek, has practiced law for more than 40 years, concentrating on family law, child welfare, children's rights, Social Security, and appellate work. Carolyn has written and published extensively on civil rights and Social Security law, and has lectured around the world. Carolyn served as Supreme Court counsel for the respondent in Camreta v. Greene, 131 S.Ct. 2020 (2011), in which an armed police officer and a male child-abuse caseworker removed a nine-year-old girl from her school classroom and interrogated her for two hours behind closed doors. Carolyn established the constitutional right of parents to hearings before their children are removed, except in emergency situations. Tenenbaum v. Williams, 193 F.3d 581 (2d Cir. 1999). Her ground-breaking cases include establishing and protecting the rights of domestic violence victims in Nicholson v. Scoppetta.

**Hilary Kushins** is a founding member of Dependency Advocacy Center and currently is the Drug Court and Training Programs Manager at Dependency Advocacy Center in San Jose, CA. She is one of the primary attorneys representing parents in the dependency drug court and sits on several committees responsible for the overall program and policy of dependency drug court in Santa Clara County. Ms. Kushins has been a consultant and trainer for the National Drug Court Institute in assisting jurisdictions throughout the country in implementing their own dependency drug courts. She was a staff attorney practicing dependency law from 2000 - 2006 and was a supervising attorney from 2006-2008. Ms. Kushins received her Juris Doctorate and Masters in Social Work from the University of Maryland at Baltimore in 1998.
Leah Lanford graduated from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1999 and initially worked as a federal law clerk for four years. After clerking, she primarily handled criminal appeals by appointment, but her love of the law did not truly flourish until a juvenile judge goaded her into becoming dependency-neglect qualified so she could work as an ad litem in his court. She spent four years representing foster children at trial, and handling appeals for the ad litem program. However, after becoming frustrated with system inadequacies, she went to work full time as an appellate attorney representing the parents of children in foster care. She has never looked back. Leah has become a voice for parents at the legislative table and she frequently trains trial attorneys in an effort to bridge the gap between trial and appeal. She will always be committed to effectuating change in the current culture of child welfare.

David J. Lansner worked for legal services programs and the Legal Aid Society’s Juvenile Rights Division in New York City, and has been in private practice since then. Lansner & Kubitschek has established numerous precedents in the field of child welfare, including the rights of children in foster care to protection from mistreatment, due process rights for parents listed in the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, for parents threatened with the removal of their children, and for victims of domestic violence. David also served part-time as Counsel to the New York State Assembly Committee on Children and Families and as a member and former Co-Chair of the New York State Citizen Review Panels for Child Protective Services.

Elizabeth Larin is a 2005 graduate of NYU School of Law, where she had the privilege of participating in Marty Guggenheim’s Family Defense Clinic. Prior to law school, Elizabeth was a housing activist and a middle school teacher. After graduation, Elizabeth served for eight years as an attorney in the Capital Habeas Unit of the Federal Community Defender Organization of Philadelphia, where she represented men and women on death row in their appeals. Her work there compelled her to want to work to improve the lives of clients before they ended up in the criminal justice system. For that reason, in 2013, she made the switch to the Family Advocacy Unit at Community Legal Services. She is happy to return to the work she loved so much in Law School.

Amanda Lauer is a child welfare specialist practicing in Phoenix, Arizona. She works for the Maricopa County Legal Defender’s Office where she represents parents only in dependency, severance, and guardianship matters. Some of Amanda’s clients are immigrants or parents in other countries whose children have immigrated to Arizona. The Legal Defender’s Office recently began a holistic program with support from the Bronx Defender’s Officer. They also represent criminal defendants and do appeals for mental health matters. Amanda has been representing parents for the last 5 years. Amanda was previously a prosecutor for about 8 years and had a “change of heart” in career choice after working in the office of now disbarred County Attorney Andrew Thomas. Thomas along with then Sheriff Joe Arpaio created a culture of fear in Maricopa County in the immigrant community targeting them in raids and prosecutions. Amanda is married and is the mother to 2 little girls.

Mimi Laver is the Director of the National Alliance for Parent Representation at the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law. Mimi regularly works with stakeholder groups to identify and implement necessary reforms for local court and child welfare systems. Mimi’s publications include Opening Doors for LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care: A Guide for Lawyers and Judge, It’s My Life, Foundations for Success: Strengthening Your Agency Attorney Office and edited Representing Parents in Child Welfare Cases: A Basic Introduction for Attorneys. In collaboration with expert work groups, Mimi drafted Standards of Representation for Child Welfare Agency Attorneys and Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Parents in Abuse and Neglect Cases. Mimi drafted the Indicators of Success for Parents Representation which
is a guide for courts and states with both qualitative and quantitative tools to measure progress. Prior to joining the ABA, Mimi was a Deputy City Solicitor in the Health and Human Services Unit of the Philadelphia Law Department. Mimi earned her JD from Temple University School of Law and her BA from Vassar College.

**Erin Lecocq** is an attorney based in South Puget Sound area in Washington who focuses on dependency defense cases for incarcerated parents. She graduated *cum laude* from Seattle University School of Law where she represented incarcerated parents in child welfare cases in the Incarcerated Parents Advocacy Clinic. There, she discovered her calling: advocating for incarcerated parents facing unique challenges in their dependency cases as a result of criminal charges and convictions. Erin has conducted trainings for students and attorneys about how to work with incarcerated parents in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. She sits on the Coalition for Children of the Incarcerated, and volunteers at the Washington Corrections Center for Women providing advice to incarcerated mothers involved in dependency proceedings. Erin, and her partner, Cameron Buhl, co-founded Infinitum Legal Counsel, a non-profit law firm, which serves moderate means, low-income, and marginalized communities. In her spare time, she enjoys playing with her four-year-old daughter.

**Annick Lenoir-Peek** is an Assistant Appellate Defender and Assistant Parent Representation Coordinator for the North Carolina Indigent Defense Services’ Office of Parent Representation. She began representing parents in child welfare cases in 1999 in South Carolina prior to moving to North Carolina. She has practiced in this area of law exclusively since 2002. In addition to representing indigent parents, Ms. Lenoir-Peek has worked on various CIP projects intended to improve outcomes for families. She has developed forms and tools to assist trial and appellate parent counsel in their representation of clients involved in court actions.

**Courtney Lewis** is an assistant public defender at the Alaska Public Defender Agency. Ms. Lewis has represented parents in child welfare cases for over 8 years, and currently represents parents who live off the “road system” in and around the Arctic Circle. She has also represented children in child welfare cases. Ms. Lewis received her juris doctorate from the University of Cincinnati College of Law in 2008 and her bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Florida in 2005. Ms. Lewis is the first person to be certified in Alaska as a child welfare law specialist by the National Association of Counsel for Children. Ms. Lewis was first certified while working in Texas in January 2013. Ms. Lewis was recognized by the Alaska Public Defender Agency as Best New Lawyer in 2010.

**Sara Lofland** has a B.A. from Yale University in Spanish Language and Literature, and a J.D. from Arizona State University, Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law. She spent the first four years of her legal career practicing juvenile immigration law for the Florence Project, and non-profit indigent immigration legal defense fund in Arizona, where she specialized in Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases. During her time at the Florence Project, Arizona became one of the country’s leading recipients of SIJS relief. Sara briefly worked as an Assistant Attorney General representing the Arizona Department of Child Safety in Juvenile matters. She has spent the past four years working for the Maricopa County Office of the Legal Advocate, where she works exclusively as a Guardian ad Litem in Juvenile Dependency cases. She has previously presented at the Arizona Public Defender’s conference on immigration issues in the dependency context, and on ethical best practices.

**Sarah Lorr** joined the Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS) Family Defense Practice in June 2014. She received her B.A. from Haverford College in 2005 and her J.D. from Fordham University in 2010. Before joining BDS, Sarah served as a law clerk to the Honorable Joan N. Ericksen in the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota, and to Hon. Boyce F. Martin in the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Following her clerkships, Sarah joined Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler as a litigation associate. While at Patterson Belknap, she worked on a variety of civil matters and dedicated many hours to the pro bono
representation of civilian detainees in a suit against a military contractor. During law school, Sarah interned at
the Capital Appeals Project in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she represented inmates on death row. She also
participated in the International Justice Clinic where she assisted in the representation of an individual detained
at Guantanamo Bay. At Fordham, Sarah was a Notes & Articles Editor on the Fordham Law Review. Prior to
law school, Sarah worked as a paralegal at the Federal Defenders of New York.

Carrie Ann Lucas, J.D., CWLS, is currently a Staff Attorney and Case Strategies Director at the Colorado
Office of Respondent Parent Counsel. She was the founder and executive director of Disabled Parents Rights in
Windsor, Colorado. Ms. Lucas is a nationally recognized expert on representing disabled parents. Ms. Lucas, a
former teacher, is a graduate of the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law. Ms. Lucas has been a recipient
of an Equal Justice Works fellowship and a Petra Foundation fellowship. When not practicing law or attending
her kids’ activities, Ms. Lucas enjoys photography, camping, fishing, and is an avid traveler.

Marcia Tavares Maack is the Director of Pro Bono Activities for Mayer Brown. She acts as a liaison to the
legal services and nonprofit community, develops and selects opportunities, supervises firm attorneys on pro
bono cases, and develops corporate partnerships. Her work is concentrated in international human rights,
asylum, and refugee matters. She is a member of the Association of Pro Bono Counsel. She is fluent in
Portuguese and conversant in Spanish. Marcia previously practiced in Mayer Brown’s Litigation & Dispute
Resolution group. She received a B.A. from Cornell University and a J.D. cum laude from Brooklyn Law
School.

Joyce McMillan is the Child Welfare Organizing Project’s Director of Programming. She is a graduate of
CWOP’s Parent Leadership Curriculum (PLC), a comprehensive Parent Advocate/Organizing course designed
to empower parents, families and communities impacted by child protective policies, and also completed course
hours for her CASAC-T. Joyce left a position as a Team Leader/Supervisor II at the State of New York after
being affected by the New York Child Protection System due to allegations of drug use, and is now dedicated to
transforming the current Child Protection System to a Child Welfare System that will protect and preserve
families. Ms. McMillan is the facilitator of CWOP’s PLC alongside professional guest speakers. She has
lectured to professionals at the New School, Montclair University, Hunter College, Harlem Hospital and other
institutions. She has also appeared in various media channels, and is continuously raising her voice for change.

Danielle Meitiv is a climate science consultant and organizer and the mother of Devora and Rafi Meitiv. Her
independent and healthy children walked to the park in Silver Spring Maryland, only to be stopped by police
and detained by child protection authorities. Since her first fateful encounter with child protection system,
Danielle Meitiv has given innumerable media interviews and become an advocate for families, recognizing that
while her experience is not unique, her opportunity to speak about that experience can reach audiences that
heretofore have not been aware of the harm child protection investigation can cause to children and families.

Mary Anne Mendenhall has been a family defender since 2001, when she began working at Lansner &
Kubitschek on the Nicholson v. Williams case, the class action lawsuit credited with sparking pro-parent change
on a national level. She has been an attorney in the family defense practice since 2008, and a supervisor since
2013. She has been on Defenders’ Academy faculty since 2013. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College and
Brooklyn Law School.
David M. Meyers is the Chief Operating Officer of Dependency Legal Services, where he serves as a national consultant, trainer and attorney advocate in child welfare cases. David previously served as a Senior Attorney with California’s Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families Children and the Courts (CFCC), where he developed statewide curriculum for attorneys and court professionals engaged in juvenile law practice, and represented the California judiciary on a number of state and national boards and workgroups dedicated to improving attorney representation and child welfare systems. He is currently a consultant with the American Bar Association’s National Resource Center for Juvenile and Legal Issues and member of their National Alliance for Parent Representation Steering Committee. Through Dependency Legal Services, David provides and oversees the representation of parents and children in Sonoma, Marin, Stanislaus, Yolo, Placer, Solano, Mendocino and Humboldt Counties. David is licensed to practice law in California, Arizona and the Pascua Yaqui Nation. He holds a bachelor’s in journalism and music from the University of Florida and his JD from the University of Arizona.

Melissa Michaelis Thompson, Esq Melissa is the Executive Director of the Office of Respondent Parents’ Counsel in Denver, CO, an independent judicial agency tasked with providing lawyers to indigent parents in child welfare proceedings. Prior to the ORPC, Melissa served as a Lead Attorney at the Colorado State Public Defender’s Pueblo Regional Office, where she defended the constitutional rights of indigent defendants for seven years and was part of the office management team. She is a graduate of the Family Defense Leadership Workshop at the University of Michigan and the Trial Practice Institute at the National Criminal Defense College in Georgia. Melissa received her J.D. from Wayne State University Law School, where she was an assistant editor of the Wayne Law Review, and her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan.

Amy Miller serves as Deputy General Counsel at the Office of Public Defense Services. In this role, she manages the Parent Child Representation Program and is responsible for monitoring and improving the quality of trial court representation of parents and children in juvenile court. Amy is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Alliance for Parent Representation.

Radhika Singh Miller is director of NLADA’s Civil Legal Aid Initiative. She works closely with the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Access to Justice and participating agencies in the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable, and provides training and technical assistance to support civil legal aid’s capacity to apply for and partner on federal grants.

Dr. Monique Mitchell, an interdisciplinary professor, focuses on enhancing the lives of children and youth in foster care. For six years, Dr. Mitchell served as the state director for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data collection for youth transitioning out of foster care in South Carolina. Dr. Mitchell's current research explores the intrinsic resources of youth in foster care and how they draw from their innate wisdom to transcend adverse life events. She is an international scholar in the Enhancing Life Project (http://enhancinglife.uchicago.edu/) and is invested in research that focuses on children's lived experience of grief, loss, and meaning-making. She regularly consults with the Child Welfare League of America, the National Foster Parent Association, and the Children's Bureau. Dr. Mitchell holds a PhD in Family Relations & Human Development from the University of Guelph.

Joanne Moore, Director of the Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD), oversees improvements to the right to counsel on behalf of the state. She created the Parents Representation Program, now implemented in 83% of Washington’s cases. She has participated in many justice improvement committees and is a founding member of the Steering Committee of the ABA National Alliance for Parent Representation. Ms. Moore has published numerous articles and is the author of the chapter “Reforming the System” in the 2015 ABA book Representing Parents in Child Welfare Cases. Her work improving the quality of justice has been recognized by a number of awards.
Amy Mulzer is a staff attorney and instructor of clinical law in the Disability and Civil Rights Clinic: Advocating for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at Brooklyn Law School. Previously, she was an Acting Assistant Professor of Lawyering at NYU School of Law. Professor Mulzer previously worked as a family defense attorney, first as a staff attorney at the Brooklyn Family Defense Project and then as an appellate attorney on the assigned counsel panel for the Appellate Division, Second Department. She also has represented homeless families and individuals as part of the Legal Aid Society’s Homeless Rights Project. She served as a law clerk for Judge Jack B. Weinstein of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Tyson Nelson is a Deputy County Counsel for the County of Los Angeles. He has been assigned to the Dependency Division since 2012 representing the Department of Children and Family Services in both the trial and appellate. Previously, Tyson worked at Children's Law Center of Los Angeles representing foster children in the trial court and as a part of CLCLA's writ team. He previously represented parents in dependency court at LA Dependency Lawyers.

Natalie Netzel is a staff attorney with the Mitchell Hamline Child Protection Program. Her role includes teaching and supervising students in the Mitchell Hamline Child Protection Clinic which provides direction representation to parents in the child protection system.

Eliza Patten has built her legal career around working with families involved in the child welfare system. After graduating from NYU law school in 2001, Eliza implemented the first Skadden Fellowship project focused on parent representation in child welfare, later joining San Francisco’s Legal Services for Children where she spent nine years representing children in child welfare cases. Eliza currently practices as a court-appointed attorney for parents and children in San Francisco. Together with Zabrina Aleguire, Eliza is co-founding a Family Defense Pilot at the Alameda County Public Defender’s Office.

Emily Peeler joined the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law as a Staff Attorney in early 2016. Emily works on a variety of projects including: the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, Pennsylvania Education Barriers, the Capacity Building Center for Courts, kinship care, and parent representation. Prior to this position, Emily worked at the National Association for Law Placement as a Street Law fellow where she managed a legal diversity pipeline program with law firms and high schools across the country. Emily also worked as a youth advocacy coordinator at CASA for Children of DC. Emily received her J.D. from the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law, her M.S.W. from Boston University, and B.S.W. from the University of Louisville.

David Pimentel is Associate Professor of Law at University of Idaho. He studied at BYU, Berkeley, and Harvard, with graduate degrees in law and economics from Berkeley. He worked extensively at the Hague and served as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Sarajevo. He also was a Supreme Court Fellow. His 2012 article in the Utah Law Review, Criminal Child Neglect and the Free Range Kid: Is Overprotective Parenting the New Standard of Care?, has been downloaded over 20,000 times and relied upon by appellate courts in Maryland and Kansas (e.g. State v. Cummings, 297 Kan. 716, 726-27 (2013)).

Robyn M. Powell, JD, is a PhD Candidate at The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University as well as a Research Associate at the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy. Previously, Ms. Powell served as an Attorney Advisor at the National Council on Disability (NCD), an independent federal agency that advises the President and Congress on matters concerning people with disabilities. Ms. Powell is one of the country’s foremost authorities on the rights of parents with disabilities. Ms. Powell is principal author of NCD’s Rocking the Cradle: Ensuring the Rights of Parents with Disabilities and their Children.
Clara Presler has been a staff attorney in the Family Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders since 2013, where she represents parents charged with abuse and neglect in Bronx Family Court. In 2016, she represented one of these clients in a concurrent criminal jury trial. Clara was a 2016 participant in the Family Defense Leadership Workshop at the University of Michigan Law School. Clara received her B.A. from Carleton College in 2004 and her J.D. from Michigan Law School in 2012. Clara was a 2012-13 law clerk for the Honorable Sarah Netburn in the Southern District of New York.

Colleen Puckett is a parent navigator and Manager of Client Care at Good Legal Firm. She previously went through the child welfare law system and is now using her experience to help other families. From her experience, Ms. Puckett has extensive knowledge of children’s medical issues and disabilities. Specifically, she helps parents cope with the stress of having a child in the system. She adds to her personal experience with training in child welfare law advocacy. Ms. Puckett presented at the Region IV Parents Attorney Forum of the Parents Representation Project of the ABA, the Georgia Youth Law Conference, the Advanced Parent Attorney Training, and ABA National Parent Conference.

Jeyanthi Rajaraman, Esq., is the Chief Council and a supervising attorney of Legal Services of New Jersey’s Family Representation Project (FRP). The FRP provides parents in child abuse or neglect and termination of parental rights litigation with information, advice and representation. Additionally, the FRP provides advice and representation to youth in DCPP’s care, both those who have become parent defendants themselves and those who are seeking aging-out services from the Division. The FRP participates in many child welfare committees, including the statewide Children in Court Committee along with the Supreme Court Family Practice Committee. At the Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNC), Jey also provides advice, support, and trainings statewide for other attorneys who represent parents, and provides community trainings on various areas of advocacy. She is also responsible for training and mentoring all of New Jersey Legal Services staff and pro bono attorneys. Additionally, she is the co-chief section counsel of LSNJ’s Youth Law Project, which provides legal advice and information to New Jersey youth. As part of her work with the FRP, Jey has argued before the New Jersey Supreme Court in Re D.C. and co-authored several LSNJ’s amicus briefs such in Division of Youth and Family Services v. L.L. Jey serves as a member of the National Alliance for Parent Representation Steering Committee. She has been a presenter at the ABA national child welfare conference and at other state child welfare training conferences. In addition, Jey is the coordinator and primary trainer at Legal Services of New Jersey’s annual seminar on New Jersey child welfare litigation.

Diane L. Redleaf is the founder and Legal Director of the Family Defense Center. A child and family advocate since she graduated from Stanford Law School in 1979, Ms. Redleaf has brought more than three dozen major systemic reform cases on behalf of families, has been involved in over 60 cases with published opinions, including a large number of precedential appellate decisions, has spearheaded major legislative and regulatory reforms in Illinois, and has represented parents in hundreds of juvenile court and administrative proceedings. Ms. Redleaf is widely considered a national leader in the field of parent representation in child welfare proceedings and is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Alliance for Parent Representation.

Kathy Robertson, LCSW, is the Family Advocacy Program Manager, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Military Community and Family Policy (Department of Defense). Ms. Robertson has the responsibility for policy development, the oversight framework, and budget support of the Family Advocacy Programs (FAP) in the Military Departments supporting military families worldwide. FAP is the DoD program designated to address child abuse and domestic abuse in military families in cooperation with civilian social service agencies and military and civilian law enforcement agencies. She has responsibilities for responding to Congress on legislative/National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requirements. Ms. Robertson has a broad background in military family programs and clinical experience working with victims of domestic
violence and sexual assault.

**Brenda Comer Robinson** is a certified welfare law specialist currently practicing with the CLCCAL. As both a case carrying and supervising attorney, Ms. Robinson argues over 250 bench trials. Prior to joining CLCCAL, Ms. Robinson was a panel attorney appointed by the Los Angeles Superior Court to represent parents in Juvenile Dependency at Edelman Children's Court. Her knowledge of child welfare and abuse and neglect ultimately led her to the LA County Board of Supervisors where she worked as the Senior Policy Deputy to Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

**Molly Ryan-Kills Enemy** is a Denver, Colorado parent of five children. She is a member of the Rosebud Sioux tribe in South Dakota. She has been a parent in child protection cases, and parental rights to one child were severed. Ms. Ryan-Kills Enemy successfully reunited with her other four children. She is a recovering addict, and manages mental health issues. After her children were returned home, she worked as a parent partner in Denver. She continues to serve the community as a community leader and activist.

**Lisa K. Sangoi** is a lawyer and activist who is fighting the ways the criminal legal and child welfare systems criminalize poor people and people of color, particularly poor women of color. She has written and lectured widely on these injustices, and worked on a number of advocacy campaigns to roll back laws, policies and practices that punish women and mothers. She has also had the honor and privilege of representing women targeted by the child welfare and criminal legal systems through trial and appellate advocacy. With the support of the Soros Justice Fellowship program, she is currently researching and writing the first ever advocacy report on how the child welfare system fails parents, children and families in its response to allegations of drug use by parents. She earned her law degree from NYU School of Law. She has a graduate degree in human rights studies, and undergraduate degrees in math and philosophy.

**Vivek Sankaran**, advocates for the rights of children and parents involved in child welfare proceedings. His work focuses on improving outcomes for children in foster care by empowering their parents and strengthening decision-making processes in juvenile courts. A clinical professor of law at the University of Michigan Law School, Professor Sankaran directs both the Child Advocacy Law Clinic and the Child Welfare Appellate Clinic, through which law students represent children and parents in trial and appellate proceedings. Professor Sankaran has written numerous articles focused on improving the child welfare system and has litigated cases before the Michigan Supreme Court. In addition, he conducts state and national trainings and works on child welfare initiatives with various national groups, including the American Bar Association, Casey Family Programs, and the National Center for State Courts. Professor Sankaran is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Alliance for Parent Representation. After graduating from Michigan Law in 2001, Professor Sankaran received a Skadden Fellowship to represent children at The Children's Law Center in Washington, D.C., where he remained until 2005, when he joined the Law School faculty. In 2009, Professor Sankaran founded the Detroit Center for Family Advocacy, the first organization in the country to provide multidisciplinary legal assistance to families to prevent the unnecessary entry of children into foster care. In 2011, he was named Michigan's Parent Attorney of the Year. Most recently, Professor Sankaran co-edited both the first national book for family defense lawyers and the third edition of *Child Welfare Law and Practice*, a widely recognized resource used by child welfare lawyers across the country.

**Aurora Smaldone** is a Project Director at Maine Behavioral Healthcare and oversees the Defending Childhood Initiative, a Department of Justice sponsored multi-year project aimed at innovating, implementing and evaluating trauma interventions. Ms. Smaldone is a former family law attorney at Maine’s statewide legal aid organization where she litigated high conflict, complex family law disputes on behalf of victims of domestic violence and served as a guardian ad litem. Prior to practicing law, Ms. Smaldone taught in a high-poverty public school in New York City under the auspices of Teach for America. She has previously presented at the
Dr. Kevonne Small, an attorney advisor in the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section (FCS) in DOJ’s Civil Rights Division, investigates allegations of Title VI violations and ensures Federal agencies consistently and effectively enforce statutes and related Executive Orders that prohibit discrimination in programs that receive Federal financial assistance. Prior to joining FCS, she was a trial attorney in the Division’s Criminal Section prosecuting alleged civil rights offenses involving official misconduct, hate crimes, and human trafficking. Prior to joining DOJ, she worked at Washington, DC area think tank organizations and taught criminal justice at California State University in San Bernardino, CA.

Adrian (Addie) Smith is an attorney at Portland law firm Youth, Rights, & Justice where she represents parents and children in dependency appeals. Prior to this she was appointed by Governor Kate Brown to administer a Task Force that reviewed dependency representation in Oregon and provided policy recommendations to improve this system and was the staff attorney at the National Indian Child Welfare Association. In addition to being an attorney she has a Master’s in Social Work and essential front line social work experience.

Sheldon Spotted Elk is a Director with Casey Family Programs, Indian Child Welfare Unit, in Denver, Colorado, a national foundation dedicated to building “Communities of Hope” to improve safety and success of children and their families. Sheldon collaborates with Tribes, states and other national organizations to advance issues around Tribal child welfare systems, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Tribal Courts and Tribal-State judicial forums. Sheldon previously worked as a Guardian ad Litem attorney representing the best interest of children in child welfare legal proceedings. Sheldon also served as the Chief of Staff for the Ute Indian Tribe and provided legal research for the Ute Tribal Court of Appeals.

Melissa L. Staas received her J.D., magna cum laude, from Loyola University Chicago School of Law in May 2007, where she was the Editor-in-Chief of the Children’s Legal Rights Journal. In 2010, Melissa was awarded the Chicago Sun-Times Public Interest Fellowship. Having joined the Family Defense Center in 2007, Melissa has represented hundreds of families involved in the child welfare system gaining particular expertise in cases involving medical opinions of abuse, including fractures and head injuries. Melissa has presented at past NACC and ABA national conferences, and has authored articles, addressing accusations of “shaken baby syndrome” in the child welfare system.

Dr. Tricia Stephens is an Assistant Professor at the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, City University of New York. Her research is informed by lessons learned from her 15 years of clinical practice and research experience in the effective approaches to healing from exposure to trauma, that is, trauma is treatable once it is appropriately identified and trauma-informed treatments are provided. Focusing on poverty-impacted communities of color, Dr. Stephens utilizes phenomenological qualitative research and mixed methods designs to measure the occurrence of complex trauma in child welfare involved parents. Her collaborative research also includes creating evidence-informed interventions to improve outcomes for child-welfare involved adults, children and families. She has presented the findings from her research in peer-reviewed journals, at national conferences, within community-based and grass-roots parent organizations, and to the NYC Administration for Children Services. Her research has direct implications for practice and policy in the fields of child welfare and mental health treatment.

Dr. Kelly Sykes maintains a private practice in Brooklyn New York that specializes in child adolescent clinical psychology and family forensics. She specializes in forensic parental fitness exams in child protection cases. As an expert witness, she is frequently called upon to testify on matters concerning best practices in the evaluation
of parent-child and caregiver-child relationships. Dr. Sykes is particularly interested in challenging assumptions that parents with mental illness and intellectual disabilities cannot by default adequately take care of their children.

**Scott Trowbridge** has been a staff attorney with the ABA Center on Children and the Law since 2007. He has provided technical assistance to states and tribes on a variety of child welfare topics. Particular areas of interest include parent and child empowerment in legal representation, the Indian Child Welfare Act, and systemic data-driven decision making. Prior to attending law school at the University of the District of Columbia, Mr. Trowbridge was a supervisor and case worker for the Tennessee Department of Children Services in various departments. He received his BA in psychology and philosophy/religion from Queens University of Charlotte.

**Sonja Ulrich**, MSW, is an independent social worker with 23 years of experience in child welfare, including completing several hundred adoptive, relative and kinship placement home studies, but as a state employee and as a private consultant. Ms. Ulrich current works with Tribal governments to improve child welfare systems. Ms. Ulrich has been a line social worker in Minnesota and Washington State. She has worked at a leadership level on statewide child welfare practice issues. Ms. Ulrich has conducted training on safety and risk assessments and provided direct service to children and families for over 16 years.

**Tara Urs** is a public defender in Seattle at The Defender Association Division of the King County Department of Public Defense. She previously represented parents in child welfare cases at the Brooklyn Family Defense Practice. Tara is the author of several law review articles on child welfare law, transitional justice, and domestic violence. Most recently, Tara Urs and Amy Mulzer co-authored the law review article However Kindly Intentioned: Structural Racism and Volunteer CASA Programs. Tara graduated from New York University School of Law in 2005 where she was an Arthur Garfield Hays Civil Liberties Fellow. Immediately after law school Tara worked in Cambodia as a Resident Fellow with the Open Society Justice Initiative designing and evaluating outreach systems for the Khmer Rouge trials. Tara clerked for Judge Deborah Batts, and taught legal skills at Brooklyn Law School and Seattle University School of Law.

**Jeanette Vega** has contributed to Rise since 2008 and became a Parent Leader in 2016. Jeanette specializes in presenting to child welfare professionals about her experience and about parents' perspectives. Jeanette graduated from the Child Welfare Organizing Project's Parent Leadership Training in 2005 and was one of the first parent advocates to staff Child Safety Conferences in New York City. Jeanette worked as a Parent Advocate at Episcopal Social Services for three years and is also certified as a visiting coach/host.

**Anne Venhuizen** graduated cum laude from New York University School of Law. Upon graduation from law school, she clerked for the Honorable Robert J. Jonker of the Western District of Michigan. During law school, she interned at the Public Defender Service in Washington, D.C. and was a summer associate at Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld. Prior to law school, Anne spent a year working in the Palestinian Territories. Anne received her undergraduate degree from Calvin College. She is a team leader and supervisor of the training team at The Bronx Defenders.

**Brandy Wagstaff** is a Trial Attorney in the Disability Rights Section of the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. Ms. Wagstaff represents the United States in enforcement actions alleging violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Ms. Wagstaff’s enforcement efforts focus on discrimination by both private and public entities. Ms. Wagstaff also served for several years as an attorney advisor in the Disability Rights Section, where she worked on developing regulations under the ADA and providing counsel to attorneys on administrative law issues. Ms. Wagstaff is also an adjunct professor who teaches courses in legal writing, appellate advocacy, and disability law.
Carolyn Walther, Esq. is a Litigation Supervisor who joined the Center for Family Representation in September of 2007 after graduating cum laude from NYU School of Law. While attending NYU Law, she participated in the creation of a report published by the Brennan Center for Justice concerning the impact of the Adoption and Safe Families Act on incarcerated parents. Ms. Walther also received the Thomas Stoddard Award, which recognizes a graduating student’s outstanding editorial contribution to NYU Law’s Journal of Legislation and Public Policy.

Jessica Weidmann is the Operations Director at Rise. She came to Rise from the Center for Family Representation where she was a Staff Attorney representing parents and an Equal Justice Works Fellow, focusing on the intergenerational cycle of foster care. Jessica is a graduate of Columbia Law School and Columbia School of Social Work. She has also worked in domestic health policy research and on international women’s health initiatives.

Richard Wexler is Executive Director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform. His interest in child welfare grew out of 19 years of work as a reporter for newspapers, public radio and public television. He is the author of Wounded Innocents: The Real Victims of the War Against Child Abuse (Prometheus Books: 1990, 1995).

Terrence Wilson joined Barton Child Law and Policy Center in July of 2016 as the Robin Nash Postgraduate Fellow in Law. Prior to joining the Barton Center, Terrence worked in a variety of areas including political campaigning, legislative affairs, local government, and civil rights law and policy. Terrence attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a Morehead-Cain Scholar. He graduated with honors with a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology and a minor in Social & Economic Justice. He then attended the University of Georgia where he received his Juris Doctor and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration.

Hilary Woodward serves as Director of Digital Strategies at the National Women’s Law Center, where she oversees their website, email advocacy, online fundraising and social media. Before joining the Center, Hilary was the senior communications strategist at Jobs With Justice, where she led the nonprofit’s digital efforts and worked to build public support for policies that benefit working people. Hilary is also an experienced social media trainer, leading sessions at Netroots Nation and other conferences on optimizing social content and pulling off strategic campaigns with limited resources. Hilary graduated from St. Mary’s College of Maryland with a bachelor of arts in Philosophy.

Joanna Woolman is an Associate Professor Mitchell Hamline School of law and the Executive Director of the Mitchell Hamline Child Protection Program. The Program’s mission is to promote legal-system reform on behalf of children and families through education and training, research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the development of best practices in child protection. Joanna is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Alliance for Parent Representation.
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