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Judge Stephen M. Rubin, President  
August 1, 2005

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, (NCJFCJ) repeats their prior recommendation that the Commission utilize language based on the need for judges to take on non-traditional, problem-solving roles, such as administrator, collaborator, convener, and advocate. They note that many of these roles are not traditional for a judge, yet for juvenile court judges, they are essential if the work of the court is to be successful, and if court orders will be carried out. In deciding the future of a child or family member, the juvenile court judge must, in addition to making a legal decision, also be prepared to take on the role of an administrator, a collaborator, a convener, and an advocate.

The submissions from NCJFCJ over the past two years were developed in response to resolutions of the Conference of Chief Justices. In August 2000, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) took a strong, supportive stand recognizing the need for juvenile, family and other state courts to be problem-solving courts.

The NCJFCJ offer in their comment a number of state judicial ethics opinions that make it clear that there is great uncertainty among judges and widely divergent opinions among ethics advisory boards as to the type and level of community involvement allowed.

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges offers again its five main suggestions for changes to the revisions posted which were submitted in January, 2005. they request that if the Commission is unwilling to include our proposed language in Suggestion #1 as an affirmative duty, they consider including it in the black letter law of the Canon as permissive.