

Resources and References

Online Resources/Information Clearinghouses

There are a number of national level policy and research organizations and government agencies that share a focus on child welfare issues and the role of the court system in the processing of child abuse and neglect cases. The websites of these organizations and agencies are excellent sources of information on numerous topics and provide the latest in commentary, research, best practice guidelines, innovative programs and other initiatives in various jurisdictions. Many also highlight training and technical assistance opportunities. Overviews and links to some of the more prominent and comprehensive sites are provided below. Selected materials from the various web sites are also referenced in the Topics section of this chapter.

A. American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law

www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law.html

The Center on Children and the Law is a program of the Young Lawyers Division and aims to improve the lives of children through advances in law, justice, knowledge, practice and policy. Specific projects include:

- ABA Permanency Project
- Adolescent Health
- Bar-Youth/Aging Out of Foster Care
- Court Improvement Program (CIP)
- Commission on Youth at Risk

The Center has established a **Legal Center for Foster Care and Education** which is a collaboration between Casey Family Programs and the Center in conjunction with the Education Law Center-PA and the Juvenile Law Center. The site includes publications, such as the *Blueprint*, and a series of guidelines on special education issues and the role of the court.

www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law/what_we_do/projects/education.html

The Center is also part of a collaborative partnership with the Casey Family Programs, Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Child Welfare Foundation, and the Steering Committee for the National Parents' Counsel Organization in establishing the **National Project to Improve Representation for Parents Involved in the Child Welfare System**. This project provides training and technical assistance to jurisdictions seeking to improve the organization and quality of legal representation for parents.

www.abanet.org/child/parentrepresentation/home.html.

B. American Humane

www.americanhumane.org

The Children's Division of American Humane still houses information and resources related to their former programs (i.e. FGDM), policies, training, evaluations and other research related to the prevention and response to child abuse and neglect. Their website also has information about fathers and the Fatherhood Initiative.

C. Casey Family Programs

www.casey.org

Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest operating foundation entirely focused on foster care. The goal of the foundation is to safely reduce the number of children in foster care and improve the lives of those who remain in care through research and policy recommendations. The website www.casey.org/resources/publications/directory/subject/ includes a library of materials on foster care and child welfare issues which is an excellent resource for research and commentary on educational issues, kinship care, racial disproportionality, and youth aging out of the foster care system, among other topics.

How are the Children? Inspiring Hope. Renewing Vision. Influencing Action.(2010).

www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ar/pdf/2010.pdf

D. Child Welfare Information Gateway

www.childwelfare.gov/index.cfm

This website serves as an information clearinghouse on child welfare issues and is sponsored by the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. References are categorized into the following topic areas:

- Family Centered Practice
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect
- Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect
- Supporting and Preserving Families
- Out-of-Home Care
- Achieving and Maintaining Permanency
- Adoption

E. Courts Catalyzing Change: Achieving Equity and Fairness in Foster Care Initiative

www.ncifcj.org/sites/default/files/ccctodayarticlefinal.pdf

The Courts Catalyzing Change Initiative is directed by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges with funding from Casey Family Programs and support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice. The purpose is to bring together judicial officers and other system experts to set a national agenda for court-based training, research, and reform initiatives to reduce the disproportionate representation and disparate treatment of children of color in the dependency court system.

www.ncifcj.org/our-work/courts-catalyzing-change

F. Education Law Center

www.elc-pa.org

Since 1975, the Education Law Center of Pennsylvania (ELC) has worked to make good public education a reality for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable children – poor children, children of color, children with disabilities, English language learners, children in foster homes and institutions, and others. The Education Law Center's website offers detailed, helpful information regarding education.

G. Juvenile Law Center

www.jlc.org

The Juvenile Law Center is a public interest law firm for children in the United States which was founded in 1975 and based in Philadelphia. The Center authored the *Pennsylvania Judicial Deskbook: A Guide to Statutes, Judicial Decisions and Recommended Practices for Cases Involving Dependent Children in Pennsylvania* and published the fourth edition in 2004. Other publications of interest are available at www.jlc.org/resources/publications and include:

Promises Kept, Promises Broken: An Analysis of Children's' Right to Counsel in Dependency Hearings in Pennsylvania (2001)

Dependent Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: A Judicial Guide (2003)

Solving the Data Puzzle: A How-to Guide on Collecting and Sharing Information to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children in Out-of-Home Care (2008)

Child Abuse and the Law (2007)

H. Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect

www.kempe.org

The Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect is recognized as a world leader in child abuse treatment programs, and has been at the forefront in the fight against child abuse. The Kempe Center is the organization that currently houses the **National Center on Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)** to promote and support family and community involvement and leadership on decision-making about children who need protection or care.

The Center provides training, technical assistance, research, and resources to communities implementing FGDM, and its website has links to a series of policy briefs, FGDM FAQs, and articles on the history of FGDM and other related topics. Numerous articles and issue briefs on FGDM are available including:

The Critical Role of Leadership in Family Group Decision Making

The Intersection between Family Group Decision Making and Systems of Care

Strategies to Respond to the Research Needs of Family Group Conferencing

Using Family Group Conferencing in the Children's Mental Health Context

Information can be found at: www.fgdm.org

I. National Association of Counsel for Children

www.naccchildlaw.org

The mission of the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) is to strengthen the delivery of legal services for children, enhance the quality of legal services, and improve courts and agencies that serve children. Publications available through the website include:

Child Welfare Law and Practice: Representing Children, Parents and State Agencies in Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency Cases (2005)

Recommendations for Representation of Children in Abuse and Neglect Cases (2001)

J. National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association
www.casaforchildren.org

While the National CASA website is primarily devoted to information for local CASA programs and volunteers, the Association recognizes that judges play a key role in developing new programs, sustaining existing programs, and expanding the network.

The website provides a link to the Association's monthly e-newsletter, *The Judges' Page*, and maintains a *Judges' Corner Resource Center*.
www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5301323/k.8E21/Judges_Page.htm

The **Pennsylvania CASA Association** [www.pacasa.org] is a statewide non-profit organization that promotes public awareness of the CASA concept, helps local programs develop, and generally supports local programs in Pennsylvania. The website provides links to the *National CASA Program Standards* and a *Judges' Guide to CASA/GAL Program Development*.

K. National Center for Juvenile Justice
www.ncjj.org

The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) is the nation's only non-profit research organization solely dedicated to the juvenile justice system. Founded in 1973 as the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Judges, the Center serves as a resource for independent and original research directly or indirectly related to delinquency and child abuse and neglect. The Center provides information and analysis on the nature, extent, and trends in juvenile crime and victimization in the United States; conducts evaluations of prevention and intervention programs; conducts assessments of case processing; and compiles and analyzes state laws.

L. National Center for State Courts
www.ncsc.org

Through its *Information and Resources* division, the National Center provides an overview, FAQs, and links to articles and reports on dependency court issues. Specific categories include:

- Dependency court reform
- Educational Success and Stability
- Family drug treatment courts
- Infants and toddlers
- Involving Children and Parents

- Judicial Guides Checklists and Tools
- Mediation and Family Group Conferencing
- Older Youth
- Performance measurement
- Racial and ethnic disproportionality
- Representation
- Safely Reducing the Number of Children in Foster Care
- Tribal Courts
- Well-Being
- Data exchange and IT systems

The Center also publishes a quarterly e-newsletter, *Continuing Upward from the Summit*, which highlights innovations, accomplishments, and events throughout the country related to family courts and child welfare.

M. National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law/what_we_do/projects/rcj.html

This website is funded by the Children's Bureau and is supported through the collaborative efforts of the American Bar Association, National Center for State Courts, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The site contains information on state Court Improvement Programs and includes a catalog of progress reports and examples of initiatives by state. New developments and innovations across state court improvement programs can be found in the section on National Court Improvement Progress Report and Catalog.

N. National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

www.ncjfcj.org

The website contains links to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' widely referenced works on court practices in child abuse and neglect cases:

Resource Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (1995)

Adoption and Permanency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (2000)

Back to Basics: Fundamental Application of the Resource and Adoption Guidelines in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (2006)

The Resource Guidelines: Supporting Best Practices and Building Foundations for Innovation in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (2009)

There is also information and links to publications on NCJFCJ's Child Victims Act Model Courts Project, which provides technical assistance and training to more than 30 selected local and state jurisdictions in order to improve court practice and improve outcomes for children. This program is based on the best practices outlined in the Resource Guidelines and Adoption and Permanency Guidelines. Recent publications on the Model Courts program include:

Model Court Status Report 2006/2007: A Snapshot of the Child Victims Act Model Courts Project (2008)

The Model Court Effect: Proven Strategies in Systems' Change (2009)

NCJFCJ publishes *The Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, a quarterly compilation of articles on topics related to the field of juvenile justice and family law. NCJFCJ has also conducted research and published reports and technical assistance briefs on other specific child welfare issues and programs which are referenced in the Topics section below.

O. National Evaluation of the Court Improvement Program

www.pal-tech.com/cip/index.cfm

The National CIP Evaluation is a five year study that is funded by the Children's Bureau and conducted by a partnership of three organizations: Planning and Learning Technologies (Pal-Tech), the Urban Institute, and the Center for Policy Research. The project is describing the many paths followed by state courts to improve the oversight of foster care and adoption cases and analyze the outcomes achieved. The results will provide information on effective models for juvenile and family court reform. The first in a planned series of reports, *Synthesis of 2005 Court Improvement Program Reform and Activities: Final Report (2007)*, as well as other information on the project is available on the website.

P. Office of Children and Families in the Court

www.ocfcpcourts.us/

The Office of Children and Families in the Court (OCFC) was created by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania to make more positive outcomes for children involved in child abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. The OCFC's work is guided by four principles: protect children, promote strong families, promote child well-being, and provide timely permanency. The website contains a link to a resource center for judges and other legal professionals

[https://ocfcpacourts.us/judges-and-legal_professionals/] which includes information regarding the Children's Roundtable Initiative, Permanency Practice Initiative (including FGDM), three-month court reviews, and expedited appeals. Additionally, the website provides specific information for children/youth, parents, family and community members, and human service professionals. Downloads of relevant federal and state laws are available, as well as information on training opportunities. The website also contains valuable information on all of the State Roundtable Workgroups
www.ocfcpacourts.us/childrens-roundtable-initiative/state-roundtable-workgroups

Q. Pennsylvania Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI)

www.ocfcpacourts.us/childrens-roundtable-initiative/permanency-practice-initiatives

To accomplish activities set forth by the membership of the State Roundtable the OCFC, in partnership with Department of Public Welfare's Office of Children, Youth and Families (DPW/OCYF), developed the Pennsylvania Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI).

The PPI is a collaborative effort between a variety of agencies including the OCFC, DPW/OCYF, FGDM Statewide Implementation Leadership Team, Family Development Credential Program through the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program, and the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network, along with local child welfare agency directors and local judges.

The focus of the PPI is to provide enhanced judicial oversight with social work best practice in each county to increase the number of children safely maintained in their own homes and expedite the safe return home of children already in the foster care system. Accordingly, focus is on saturation of front end services which empower families to safely and effectively maintain the child or youth in the home; identify kin or other permanent resources; while at the same time providing the family with the necessary services to alleviate the circumstances which caused the referral for services.

To accomplish this focus, the PPI seeks to implement or enhance a variety of services prior to the child/youth coming into out-of-home care or immediately following the need for such placement. These services include:

1. Three (3) Month Court Review Hearings (minimum)
2. Family Finding
3. Active Local Children's Roundtable
4. Family Group Decision Making
5. Family Development Credentialing (also known as Credential for Strengths-Based Family Workers)
6. Training regarding grief and loss for children in the child welfare system

R. The Pew Charitable Trusts – Foster Care Reform

www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_detail.aspx?id=8

From 2003 to 2009, the Pew Commission on Foster Care worked with partners at the local, state and national level to ensure that more children were living in safe and permanent homes. In 2004, the Commission released a comprehensive report, *Fostering the Future: Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being for Children in Foster Care*, with a set of recommendations designed to reform the way the federal government supports children who are abused or neglected and to encourage greater judicial accountability through the implementation of better case tracking systems. Other reports available for download from the Pew website include:

Strengthening Families through Guardianship (2008)

Time for Reform: Aging Out and On Their Own (2007)

Improving Outcomes Together: Court and Child Welfare Collaboration (2005)

S. The Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania

www.pacourts.us

The website for the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania is a rich resource that hosts the sites for both the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (Judicial Administration) and the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (Judicial Administration/Programs). Supreme Court opinions and Superior Court opinions, rules that govern various court sections and data dashboard information can also be found.

Judicial Guides, Checklists, and Tools

Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys, American Bar Association and ACTION for Child Protection (2009)

nrccps.org/documents/2009/pdf/The_Guide.pdf

Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Futures: A Judge's Guide, American Bar Association in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Zero to Three National Policy Center (2009)

www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law/publications.html

Questions Every Judges Should Ask About Infants and Toddlers in the Child Welfare System, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2002)

www.npr.org/programs/atc/features/2003/mar/juvenile_court/questions_every_judge_should_ask.pdf

Visitation with Infants and Toddlers in Foster Care: What Judges and Attorneys Need to Know, American Bar Association and the Zero to Three National Policy Center (2007)

www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/center_on_children_and_the_law/parentrepresentation/policy_brief2.authcheckdam.pdf

A Judicial Checklist for Children and Youth Exposed to Violence, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2006)

www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/judicial-checklist-children-and-youth-exposed-violence

Asking the Right Questions II: Judicial Checklists to Meet the Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2008)

www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/asking-right-questions-ii-judicial-checklists-meet-educational-needs

Dependent Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: A Judicial Guide, Juvenile Law Center (2003)

www.juvenilelawcenter.org/resources/publications/dependent-youth-aging-out-foster-care

Indian Child Welfare Act Checklists for Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2003)

www.ncjfcj.org/resource-library/publications/indian-child-welfare-act-checklists-juvenile-and-family-court-judges

Building A Better Court: Measuring and Improving Performance and Judicial Workload in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, National Center for State Courts, ABA Center for Children and the Law, and National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2004). See also *Toolkit for Court Performance Measurement and Improvement in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases* (2008)

secure.aidcvt.com/ProdDetails.asp?ID=0896562379&PCS=CSC&Type=SB&SUBSEL=ALLPM&Title=All+publications

Drug Court Practitioner Fact Sheet: Family Dependency Treatment Court: Applying the Drug Court Model in Child Maltreatment Cases. Wheeler, Meghan M. and Carson L. Fox, Jr., National Drug Court Institute (June 2006)

www.ndci.org/sites/default/files/ndci/FDTC_Fact_Sheet.web%5B1%5D.pdf