

Court Improvement Program Virtual Summit
August 12-13, 2020

Principles & Practice: Creating a Fully Integrated Child-Welfare System



Agenda

August 12, 2020

9-9:30 am	Welcome & Introduction of Utah's Child-Welfare Core Principles and Guiding Practices	CIP Steering Committee
	Keynote: <i>Our Moment of Obligation: Transforming Our Child Protection System into a Child Welfare System</i>	Vivek Sankaran
10-11:30 am	<i>Improving Outcomes for Court Involved Children & Families: A Reasonable Efforts Discussion</i>	Judge Leonard P. Edwards (ret.)
12:30-1:30 pm	<i>Reasonable Efforts Breakout Sessions</i>	
	Judicial Reasonable Efforts Discussion	Judge Jeffrey Noland
	Attorney Reasonable Efforts Discussion	Angela Hamilton, Mandie Torgerson, and Thomas Sitterud
	DCFS Staff: <i>Relationship Building as a Foundation for Reasonable Efforts</i>	Natalie Netzel
1:45-2:45 pm	<i>Breakout Sessions</i>	
	<i>Father Engagement: MALES (Manifesting. Action. Leveraging. Engagement. Success)</i>	Corey Best
	<i>Trauma of Removal</i>	Christopher Church
	<i>The Family First Prevention Services Act: Requirements, Lessons Learned & the Road Ahead</i>	Allison Green
	<i>Strengthening Families Using a Racial Equity Lens</i>	Dr. Jessica Pryce
	<i>Cultural Humility as an Approach to Improve ICWA Practice</i>	Sheldon Spotted Elk & Sheri Freemont
	<i>Introduction to the Safety Guide: Part 1</i>	Rob Wyman
3:15-4:15 pm	<i>Breakout Sessions</i>	
	<i>Father Engagement: MALES (Manifesting. Action. Leveraging. Engagement. Success)</i>	Corey Best
	<i>Trauma of Removal</i>	Christopher Church
	<i>The Family First Prevention Services Act: Requirements, Lessons Learned & the Road Ahead</i>	Allison Green
	<i>Strengthening Families Using a Racial Equity Lens</i>	Dr. Jessica Pryce
	<i>Cultural Humility as an Approach to Improve ICWA Practice</i>	Sheldon Spotted Elk & Sheri Freemont
	<i>Introduction to the Safety Guide: Part 2</i>	Rob Wyman

Agenda

August 13, 2020

9-9:30 am	Welcome & Call to Action	Dr. Jerry Milner & David Kelly
9:45-10:45 am	<i>Breakout Sessions</i>	
	<i>Father Engagement: MALES (Manifesting. Action. Leveraging. Engagement. Success)</i>	Corey Best
	<i>Trauma of Removal</i>	Christopher Church
	<i>The Family First Prevention Services Act: Requirements, Lessons Learned & the Road Ahead</i>	Allison Green
	<i>Strengthening Families Using a Racial Equity Lens</i>	Dr. Jessica Pryce
	<i>Cultural Humility as an Approach to Improve ICWA Practice</i>	Sheldon Spotted Elk & Sheri Freemont
	<i>Supervision During Physical Distancing</i>	Heather Meitner
10:45 am	DCFS End	
11:15 am - 12:15 pm	Legal Ethics for Attorneys and Judges <i>"It's Not You, It's Me..." Breaking up with the "Jealous Mistress"</i>	Ammon Nelson

Our Moment of Obligation: Transforming Our Child Protection System into a Child Welfare System
Vivek Sankaran, University of Michigan Law School

This session will examine how stakeholders and advocates can transform a child protective system - aimed simply to protect children from harm - into a family compassion system which actively enhances the welfare of children by engaging and supporting their families. The talk will explore innovative ways in which systems can support families through the use of compassion, actively nurturing and healing a child's meaningful relationships, and recognizing our own implicit biases so that we can support families in their attempts to become reunified.

Improving Outcomes for Court Involved Children & Families: A Reasonable Efforts Discussion
Judge Leonard P. Edwards (ret.)

This session will focus on federal law regarding reasonable efforts and improving outcomes for court-involved children and families. This will be an interactive session in which the presenter will address the following: how to change in-court behavior, the importance of reasonable efforts findings and the role of the judge in reasonable efforts findings, and how to elevate reasonable efforts when locating and engaging fathers, identifying relative placements, treating trauma, and other best practices.

Judicial Reasonable Efforts Discussion

Honorable Jeffrey Noland, Juvenile Court Judge, Second Judicial District

This session will be a follow-up discussion to the plenary session on reasonable efforts. Judges will have time to review hypothetical fact patterns and discuss whether or not they would make reasonable efforts findings to prevent removal and achieve the permanency plan.

Attorney Reasonable Efforts Discussion

Angela Hamilton, Assistant Attorney General

Mandie Torgerson, Guardian ad Litem

Thomas Sitterud, Parental Defense Attorney

This session will be a follow-up discussion to the plenary session on reasonable efforts. Attorneys will discuss their role in reasonable efforts findings. They will have time to review hypothetical fact patterns and discuss whether they would argue that reasonable efforts findings to achieve the permanency plan were made or not.

Relationship Building as a Foundation for Reasonable Efforts

Natalie Netzel, Mitchell Hamline School of Law

The presentation will first touch on the notion that child welfare agencies need to manage the secondary and vicarious trauma experienced by caseworkers to put caseworkers in the best position to provide meaningful and compassionate support to the families they serve. Essentially, one must take care of oneself to be in the best position to take care of others. It will then explore how crucial positive relationships are to success for parents in the child welfare system. Families who find themselves in the child welfare system need to be healed and not fixed. Often before a parent can accept reasonable (or active) efforts, the parent needs to feel connection and support from their caseworker. It will conclude by offering concrete suggestions for how to build relationships with parents so they can accept the help the agency is offering.

Manifesting. Action. Leveraging. Engagement. Success

Corey Best

An exploration into the most transformative ways to build relationships with parenting MALES. Participants will experience an exciting adventure into the heart, mind, and spirit of leadership. Learning how to nurture effective partnerships between fathers, child protection staff and foster parents is at the core of this transformative opportunity. It is through support and mutual respect that male parents and father figures achieve greatness for their children, families, and community. Our guests will uncover meaningful examples of what it takes to live the value of social equality, self-awareness, and reciprocity as they balance innovation with tradition. The protective factors are magical ingredients that will support systems and fathers work as partners. During your time, you will witness the joy of interdependent leadership and the power of what occurs when we focus on what is strong, while deactivate male bias!

Workshop Goals:

- Elevate the critical role societal and structural bias plays in our work and how we deactivate them
- Examine the practicality of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors
- Re-define father engagement
- Discuss the connection between values-driven practice and authentic partnerships with families

Trauma of Removal

Christopher Church, Casey Family Programs

Removal of children from their parents is child welfare's most protective safety intervention, reserved only for the most extreme instances in which a court determines it would be unsafe for the child to remain in their home, and that no reasonable efforts could be made to prevent the need for removal. However, the child welfare system is responsible for more than 250,000 child removals each year, removals which may be necessary, but are certainly not benign: the moment children are separated from their caretakers they suffer lasting harm. This session will explore the research, data, and policies related to removal, and consider strategies to ensure our removal process is carefully calibrated to ensure children do not unnecessarily pass through our nation's foster care system.

Cultural Humility as an Approach to Improve ICWA Practice

Sheri Freemont, Casey Family Programs

Sheldon Spotted Elk, Casey Family Programs

The Indian Child Welfare Act is the "gold standard of child welfare" through active efforts to keep children connected to family, kin, and culture. This session will focus on cultural humility as a best practice for attorneys, social workers, and judges to improve ICWA compliance, as well as a possible anti-racism tool in the child dependency system.

The Family First Prevention Services Act: Requirements, Lessons Learned & the Road Ahead

Allison Green, National Association of Counsel for Children

This presentation will provide an overview of key components of the 2018 Family First Prevention Services Act, the most sweeping piece of federal child welfare legislation several decades. Attendees will learn how to translate the law's mandates into daily courtroom advocacy and legal innovation. Specifically, the session will focus on advocacy tips applied to each stage of a child welfare case: pre-petition, initial hearings, placement decisions, services and permanency pathways. Participants will gain skills to leverage the language and the spirit of Family First on behalf of the children, parents and caregivers they represent. They will also learn about changes and implementation strategies since its passage, and promising approaches for the road ahead.

Strengthening Families Using a Racial Equity Lens

Dr. Jessica Pryce, Florida Institute of Child Welfare

This webinar will focus on how our system can partner with families and strengthen them. Much of the system is crisis-oriented, so there will also be a discussion of family separation and the trauma that lingers when a child is removed from their family. There will be emphasis on how this trauma deeply affects families of color. There will be strategies presented for participants to use that can strengthen families instead of separating them. It will also cover how our current child-welfare system functions, and what it could be, in a transformed capacity. Systems theory will be discussed and what it means for an entire system to evolve, including the most important and effective leadership traits needed to inspire and lead systemic change. Also, what could a transformed system mean for families, more specifically families of color, and what could it mean for stabilization of the child-welfare workforce.

Introduction to the Safety Guide

Rob Wyman, Casey Family Programs

The ABA's "Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Lawyers" offers a framework and language that enables child welfare court participants to analyze, discuss, negotiate, mediate, and litigate using commonly understood words and concepts that connect on-the-ground social work with court rule- and law-based findings and decisions. By building structure underneath broad legal language often found in child welfare laws, the Guide promotes clearer understanding of the reasons for child removal and the type of reasonable efforts that might have prevented it or would eliminate the need for it. It also should make more acute the disagreements that reach the courtroom, and leave smaller spaces for intuition, bias, and "gut feelings" that so often predominate the practice. During the session, we will show how safety-oriented practice is a way to provide hope to families who desperately need it. Finally, we will practice using the Guide and a hypothetical fact pattern to assess safety, safety plan, and develop conditions for return.

Welcome & Call to Action

Dr. Jerry Milner and David Kelly, Children's Bureau

This presentation will discuss the Children's Bureau's national vision for child-welfare systems across the United States. Child-welfare systems where families are strengthened and preserved, where youth and parents' voices are elevated and part of the problem-solving and decision-making process, and where children, youth, and parents experience high-quality legal representation and high-quality court proceedings.

Supervision During Physical Distancing

Heather Meitner, National Council on Crime and Delinquency

This presentation will discuss best practices around supervision during physical distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New problems and challenges will present themselves as supervisees begin to adjust to the changing landscape of their work. Supervisors can provide a calm moment in chaotic and stressful times that lets workers continue to do the important work they have to do.

"It's Not You, It's Me..." Breaking up with the "Jealous Mistress"

Ammon Nelson, Parental Defense Attorney

The recent report created and distributed by the American Bar Association indicates that attorneys around the country are suffering from substance abuse, mental and emotional health issues, anxiety, stress, and secondary trauma. This CLE examines attorney obligations under the Rules of Professional Conduct rules 1.1 Competence; 1.3 Diligence; and 1.4 Communication, and it will provide practice tips for complying with the ethics rules without sacrificing attorney health and wellness. It also will define stress, anxiety, and secondary trauma and provide practical techniques for managing stress and anxiety, techniques for defending against secondary trauma, techniques for overcoming burnout, and resources available to lawyers to improve their personal lives.

Speaker Biographies

Corey Best

Corey Best is first, a dedicated father. He is originally from Washington, D.C. and currently calls Florida home, where he began his transformation into adaptive leadership training, community organizing, authentic family engagement, race equity, primary prevention, and highlighting “good enough parenting” for those impacted by the child welfare system.

Corey is commonly known as a leader and skilled facilitator, bringing his professional experiences to life by activating group thinking and guiding sustainable child welfare system advancements. He was granted the 2016 Casey Family Programs Excellence for Children Award for his innovative style and approach. Most recently, he has helped to spearhead an authentic family engagement pilot through the lens of race equity. This work has allowed Corey to take leadership the next level. He believes a leader must have a set of values and behaviors that embrace differences, shared power, and social contribution to see lasting changes within our communities.

Corey is certified in the National Alliance of Children’s Trust and Prevention Fund’s Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work. In addition to several speaking and technical assistance opportunities, he proudly serves as an active Board member with Alia and is a Professional Guide for the Alia Innovation Cohort. In short, Corey’s mission is to positively impact the lives of children, families, and communities through safe and racially equitable relationships.

Christopher Church, J.D.

Christopher is a Senior Director for Strategic Consulting at Casey Family Programs, the nation's largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care and building Communities of Hope for children and families across America. In his role, Christopher oversees Casey Family Programs' work and investments in Maryland and Delaware and supports special projects in a number of other states.

Prior to joining Casey Family Programs, Christopher was the Staff Attorney at the University of South Carolina School of Law CHAMPS Clinic, a pediatric medical-legal partnership. At the clinic, he represented parents in a variety of civil matters aimed at promoting the social determinants of children's health. He also served as a consultant to a number of child welfare organizations such as Casey Family Programs, the Children's Bureau's Capacity Building Center for Courts, the ABA Center on Children and the Law, the National Center for State Courts, and NCJFCJ. His consulting focused primarily on the use of administrative data to identify opportunities for child welfare system improvement. He began his career working for Georgia's Court Improvement Program.

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. He is licensed to practice law in Georgia and South Carolina, and is South Carolina's first Child Welfare Law Specialist, a specialization certified by the National Association of Counsel for Children.

Speaker Biographies

Judge Leonard Edwards

Judge Leonard Edwards is a retired judge now serving as a consultant and educator. Judge Edwards served on the Santa Clara County Superior Court for 26 years before retiring in 2006. He served as Judge-In-Residence with the California Judicial Council for 6 years thereafter. Judge Edwards is a judicial educator having given over 500 invited presentations in 47 states and 13 foreign countries. He is a past president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. In Santa Clara County he founded or was the co-founder of the Child Advocate Program, the Domestic Violence Council, Kids in Common, and the Dependency Drug Treatment Court. He has written widely and his publications can be seen on his website – judgeleonardedwards.com.

Sheri Freemont, JD

(Turtle Mountain Chippewa/Omaha) is a Senior Director with Casey Family Programs, Indian Child Welfare Program, where she focuses on providing technical support to state and tribal jurisdictions to improve outcomes for children and families in child welfare systems, as well as supporting the Indian Child Welfare Act implementation in state forums. Her areas of focus include cultural humility, disproportionality, and attorney education for those who serve families in need. 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.

Allison Green, J.D.

Allison Green is the Legal Director at the National Association of Counsel for Children, where she manages the organization's policy advocacy and provides technical assistance to child welfare practitioners across the country. Most recently, she served as a Foster America Fellow at Missouri's Children's Division, where her work focused on strengthening the agency's collaboration with court partners. Previously, Allison was Senior Supervising Attorney at the Children's Law Center of Washington, D.C. In this role, she provided ongoing staff supervision, developed trial strategy, and contributed to training and program planning for a GAL program that represented 500 foster youth each year. Allison has presented locally and nationally on a variety of child welfare topics. She is a certified Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) and has volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. She is currently licensed to practice in Washington, D.C.

Angela Hamilton, J.D.

Angela is an Assistant Attorney General in the Child Protection Division in the Seventh District. She started with the Utah Attorney General's Office in 2002. She has a law degree from the University of Utah College of Law.

Speaker Biographies

David Kelly, J.D.

David P. Kelly, JD, serves as Special Assistant to Associate Commissioner Jerry Milner at the U.S. Children's Bureau and oversees the Bureau's work with courts and the legal community, including the State and Tribal Court Improvement Programs. Prior to joining the federal government, David was an Assistant Staff Director at the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and a Senior Assistant Child Advocate at the New Jersey Office of the Child Advocate. He began his career as a staff attorney at the Youth Advocacy Center of Covenant House New Jersey where he represented homeless, runaway, and at-risk youth on a variety of legal matters and led the organization's policy initiatives. He later became the Center's Director of Legal and Clinical services.

Heather Meitner

Heather Meitner, MSW, is the Child Welfare Practice and Team Decision Making Manager with NCCD. She works nationally with child welfare organizations as a trainer and consultant on their implementation of strength and safety-organized practice skills and helps them integrate those skills with the Structured Decision Making® (SDM) system. Heather is a licensed social worker residing in Boston. She has worked in the human services and child welfare fields for more than 20 years in multiple capacities including direct service, management, training, and consultation. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Gordon College and a master's degree in social work from Salem State College, both in Massachusetts. Heather's passion for building relationships and connecting with her audience is contagious. She is an expert in building training programs with varied methodologies to meet the needs of adult learners. She conducts consultation and workshops nationally and internationally on integrated child welfare practice, coaching, diversity and cultural competence, change management, organizational development, and facilitation skills for staff of all levels.

Dr. Jerry Milner

Jerry Milner, DSW, is the Associate Commissioner at the Children's Bureau, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. Dr. Milner began his career as a case-carrying social worker, served as director of Alabama's child welfare agency, and previously worked for the Children's Bureau where he designed and implemented Children and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). Immediately before his appointment to the ACF, Dr. Milner served as Vice President for Child Welfare Practice at the Center for the Support of Families. He received his undergraduate degree in political science from Auburn University and graduate degrees in social work from the University of Alabama. Dr. Milner brings 43 years of practice, management, and technical assistance experience in child welfare at the local, state, and federal levels.

Speaker Biographies

Natalie Netzel

Natalie Netzel is the Education and Advocacy Director of the Institute to Transform Child Protection at Mitchell Hamline School of Law. She joined the Institute to Transform Child Protection as a staff attorney in August of 2016. Natalie works directly with law and social work students in the Child Protection Clinic in representation of parents in child protection cases. She also supports institute training, research, and community engagement events. Additionally, Natalie serves as the Director of the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project at Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Prior to joining the Institute to Transform Child Protection, Natalie was a judicial law clerk for the Minnesota Court of Appeals. She received her B.A. from Hamline University, her M.S.E. in counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and her J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Ammon Nelson

Ammon is the owner of Ammon Nelson Law, PLLC, a two-attorney family law firm with offices in Ogden and Salt Lake City, Utah. His practice is focused on families handling matters dealing with divorce, custody, estate planning, parental defense, and probate. Ammon attended Weber State University for his undergraduate work and later graduated with honors from the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law. Prior to forming Ammon Nelson Law, PLLC, Ammon was an associate attorney at Burton Law Firm and a law clerk at Smith Knowles in Ogden, Utah and Martin, Shudt, Wallace, DiLorenzo, and Johnson in New York.

Ammon and his wife, Calie, recently started Attorney Alive, LLC, a company dedicated to creating resources for lawyers to not only be better lawyers, but live better lives. Their first book should be released in Fall 2020. Their self-study CLE course is currently available at www.attorneyalive.com. They manage the instagram (@attorneyalive) and Facebook (@attorneyalive) feeds for Attorney Alive.

Honorable Jeffrey J. Noland

Judge Jeffrey J. Noland was appointed to the Second District Juvenile Court by Gov. Gary R. Herbert in July 2010. He serves Davis, Morgan, and Weber counties. Judge Noland has a law degree from the University of Utah College of Law. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Noland served as a managing attorney for the Salt Lake Office of the Guardian ad Litem (GAL). Before joining the GAL in 2006, Judge Noland worked in private practice. Judge Noland currently serves as the Chair of the Court Improvement Program where he provides leadership in improving outcomes for children and families as well as developing strong Tribal-State Court relationships.

Speaker Biographies

Dr. Jessica Pryce

Dr. Pryce is an Assistant Professor at Florida State University and currently the Executive Director of the Florida Institute for Child Welfare. For the past 10 years, she has been involved at multiple angles of child welfare (direct practice, teaching + training & policy and research). She has published on child welfare related topics, such as, training and education, racial disparity and anti-poverty practices. She has presented her research at 30+ conferences both nationally and internationally. She is the author of several op-eds focused on racial disparity and effective strategies to impact racial disproportionality within child welfare. Her TED Talk on Implicit Racial Bias in Decision Making has since been viewed over 1.2 million times. Dr. Pryce has worked on the frontlines of child welfare, conducted primary research, been a policy advisor to Florida's legislature and taught graduate level courses in child welfare. Previously holding the positions of Child Protective Caseworker with the Department of Children and Families, and the Deputy Director of the University at Albany's New York State Education Consortium. In 2019, she received a 5-year appointment to the Advisory Board of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, where she consults and advises on leadership and workforce interventions around the country. She currently sits on the Florida Dependency Court Improvement Panel, alongside judges and advocates who are working towards a more trauma informed approach within the judicial system. She has maintained and cultivated a commitment to the wellbeing of vulnerable children and families, the sustainability of the child welfare workforce, and effectively addressing inequity. Her paramount goal includes re-building and leading a child welfare system that focuses on strengthening families instead of pulling them apart.

Vivek Sankaran, J.D.

Vivek Sankaran is a clinical professor of law at the University of Michigan Law School, and 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.

Thomas Sitterud, J.D.

Thomas graduated cum laude from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan in 2009. He co-founded Oliver & Sitterud Law Office in 2010 and continues to manage his practice. He currently serves as a juvenile court public defender in several rural counties in Eastern Utah.

Speaker Biographies

Sheldon Spotted Elk, JD

(Northern Cheyenne) is a Director at Casey Family Programs, Indian Child Welfare Programs, currently placed as an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) employee within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal Justice Support, working with Tribal Courts. He is a judge on the Ute Indian Tribe Court of Appeals of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation (Fort Duchesne, Utah), where he previously practiced representing children and parents in dependency. As an adjunct professor, he has taught Family Law in Indian Country at Lewis and Clark Law School. A graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law, he authored an influential article on tribal constitutional reform in the Tribal Law Journal as well as other articles on the ICWA.

Mandie Torgerson, J.D.

Mandie is a Guardian ad Litem in the Office of Guardian ad Litem and Court Appointed Special Advocates in the Seventh District. She started with the Office of Guardian ad litem in 2004. She has a law degree from the University of Idaho.

Rob Wyman, J.D.

Rob is an attorney consultant with the Judicial Engagement Team of Casey Family Programs, currently working in Maricopa County and Pima County Juvenile Courts in Arizona to further the goal of safely reducing the number of children and youth in the foster care system. Rob has trained on the ABA Safety Guide in several jurisdictions around the country. Rob spent five years after college working in the juvenile corrections systems in Washington and Oregon States in many capacities. He then went to the University of Denver to attain an MSW and JD, specializing in the representation of children and youth in the foster care system (participating in the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center Clinical Law Program). After graduation, Rob worked at The Defender Association in Seattle for 12 years, and supervised attorneys representing parents and youth in the dependency division for eight years.



Sponsored by Utah Court Improvement Program, Division of Child and Family Services & Casey Family Programs

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