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### Ask the Experts

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By Debra Pontisso, MPA, Chair, Responsible Fatherhood Roundtable

It has been 26 years since the U.S. Commission on Child and Family Welfare submitted its final report - Parenting Our Children: In the Best Interest of the Nation - to the President and Congress in September 1996. To the best of my professional knowledge, there hasn't been anything like it since. At the outset, the 15 Commission Members – a few who were appointed by President Clinton and the remainder appointed by leaders of the Senate and House – chose to focus on “custody and visitation issues that affect the children of separating, divorcing and unmarried parents”. [Read More](#)

### AFCC 15th Symposium on Child Custody

Thank you again to our sponsors of the AFCC 59th Annual Conference

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## AFCC 15TH SYMPOSIUM ON CHILD CUSTODY

# From a Full House to Parenting Apart



Online  
Parenting  
Programs

## AFCC Chapter Conferences

### AFCC Minnesota Annual Conference

July 28-29, 2022  
Minneapolis, MN / Virtual

### AFCC Ontario Annual Conference

October 13-14, 2022  
Toronto, ON

### AFCC Texas Annual Conference

December 8-9, 2022  
Austin, TX

### AFCC Arizona Annual Conference

January 20-22, 2023  
Sedona, AZ

### AFCC California Annual Conference

February 10-12, 2023

### 15th Symposium on Child Custody

Las Vegas, Nevada  
November 10-12, 2022

## From a Full House to Parenting Apart

November 10-12, 2022

Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada

For the first time ever, AFCC is coming to Las Vegas, *again*. In 2020, we had to postpone due to the coronavirus. But with the recent success of our 59th Annual Conference in Chicago, it is apparent that AFCC members have been longing to connect in person. What better place to meet up with old friends and make new friends than the City of Sin! Remember, *What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas*, except for your continuing education credits. You can *bet* on bringing home 18.5 hours of continuing education credits by attending the whole symposium, which features four pre-symposium institutes, two general sessions, and 36 outstanding workshops.

### Symposium topics include:

- AFCC *Guidelines for Parenting Plan Evaluations*
- The Dangers of Concept Creep in Family Law
- Psychological Testing
- Sorting Trauma from Stress in Family Court
- When Your Child Doesn't Want to Go
- Ethics of ODR
- Child Mental Health
- Mediation for Unrepresented Parents
- Research on Parent-Child Estrangement
- Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another
- Children with Special Needs and Resist-Refuse
- Unsticking the Stuck Client

### Book Your Hotel Room

Reserve your room for the AFCC 15th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations! Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino is now accepting reservations at the rate of \$179/night for single/double occupancy (including the resort fee). *AFCC's room block frequently sells out so **make your reservation now!***

### Exhibitor Prospectus

Exhibitors at AFCC conferences enjoy the opportunity to reach hundreds of professionals dedicated to the resolution of family conflict. Your business could hit the jackpot, too! **Read the prospectus** and contact **Patrick Sommer** to sign up now.

## AFCC Webinar Corner

## Integrating Diversity Considerations with the New Guidelines in Parenting Time Evaluations



**Thursday, July 7, 2022**

4:00pm-6:00pm Eastern Time (US/Canada)

**Registration will close on July 6, 2022, at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada .**

As an initiative of the AFCC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, **this presentation is free, but you must register to attend**. A certificate of attendance is included. The program will include an hour long presentation, followed by one hour of discussion by all participants.

Families are often not homogeneous, and each parent will bring aspects of their own distinct cultures to their relationship and to the parenting process. Intersectionality within a family can spark debate about competing values in areas ranging from gender roles to discipline to the very definition of family. Parenting Plan Evaluators must approach each new appointment with sensitivity to diversity and a willingness to learn what is important to each parent and how that will impact the children from a cultural perspective. During this workshop, presenters will review the infusion of diversity and cultural considerations into the most updated revision to the AFCC Guidelines for Conducting Parenting Plan Evaluations. They will provide strategies to enhance the skill level and knowledge needed for evaluators to adequately integrate nuances of diversity into each evaluation, to benefit the families experiencing the evaluation process more completely.



**April Harris-Britt, PhD**, is a licensed psychologist and parent coordinator. She provides training to mental health professionals, attorneys, and judges and has presented at numerous conferences regarding services for families engaged in high-conflict custody disputes. Dr. Harris-Britt is currently a member of the AFCC Task Force on Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluations, and AFCC Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.



**Andrea Jones, MSW, RSW**, is a registered social worker in Ontario, Canada. She has dedicated her practice to public service in Quebec and Ontario, Canada supporting families of all socio-demographic backgrounds. Andrea is a member of the AFCC Task Force for Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluations and the AFCC Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

**Register today!**

## **Vaccine Hesitancy in Family Law Matters**

*Kate Allan, PhD*

**Wednesday, July 13, 2022**

1:00pm – 2:00pm Eastern Time (US/Canada)

Registration will close on July 12, 2022, at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada  
[Register now!](#)

In 2019, the World Health Organization identified vaccine hesitancy as one of the top ten global health threats. Participants in the family court system are able to assist clients and their families in making decisions about vaccination for their children based on the best available evidence. This webinar will provide attendees with an overview of five vaccine-hesitant caregiver profiles drawn from an extensive review of the vaccine hesitancy literature, a review of family law precedence related to pediatric COVID-19 and routine childhood immunization will follow, and an overview of promising practices for intervening with vaccine-hesitant caregivers in the family law context.

Sponsored by [OurFamilyWizard](#).

**Kate Allan, PhD**, is a SSHRC-funded postdoctoral fellow. She is completing her second postdoctoral fellowship at the Centre for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases at the University of Toronto. During her doctoral studies, she was Manager of the Vaccine Hesitancy Study at the Fraser Mustard Institute for Human Development. Dr. Allan served on the Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health, Discharge Planning (Transition to Adult Healthcare Services) Working Group and on the Good 2 Go Transition Program Advisory Committee at The Hospital for Sick Children. Her primary research interests focus on the decision-making process of parents regarding routine childhood immunization and COVID-19 vaccination.



Continuing education credit may be available for lawyers, judges, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other professionals. [Learn more](#).

#### Registration

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$50

#### Certificate of Attendance

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$20

[Register today!](#)

## AFCC Training Programs - Save the Dates!

AFCC is bringing back virtual training program favorites for 2022-23, **The Fundamentals of Parenting Coordination** on December 5-8, 2022, and **The Fundamentals of Parenting Plan Evaluations**, on March 13-16, 2023 and March 20-22, 2023. AFCC is also pleased to introduce a newly expanded **Advanced Issues in Child Custody** program, focused on special issues in child custody, including child sexual abuse, substance misuse, parent-child contact problems, family violence, trauma and resilience, and interviewing children.

Join us for updated training programs, featuring leading experts, and introducing some new additions to the training team. [Meet the training team](#) and save the date. Registration will open soon!

## Member News

**Leslie Todd LCSW**, AFCC member from Baton Rouge has been asked to serve as AFCC-Louisiana's correspondent to The Psychology Times. The Psychology Times is known for their distinguished coverage of news and features related

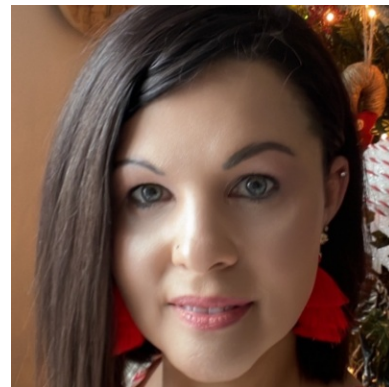
to the practice, teaching, and science of psychology and the behavioral sciences in Louisiana. Congratulations, Leslie!



**Do you have a notable achievement to share?** Email [Patrick Sommer](#) with your story and a professional head shot or book image (PNG preferred), if you have one, to be featured in next month's Member News!

## Staff News

**Abigail Rebholz** joined AFCC in June 2022 as an Administrative Assistant. Abby successfully obtained her ABA-approved Paralegal Certificate from Purdue University Northwest in 1997. Over the past twenty years, she has gained extensive knowledge as a Paralegal/Legal Assistant in the following practice areas: Personal Injury Litigation, Family Law, Trust & Estates and Corporate Real Estate. Abby also had the privilege of acting as a CASA volunteer in Porter County, Indiana. Welcome, Abby!



### AFCC eNEWS

The *AFCC eNEWS* is the monthly e-newsletter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. The *eNEWS* provides up-to-date information for professionals including practice tips, international news, and the latest initiatives in family law and conflict resolution. The *AFCC eNEWS* is provided at no charge to you; anyone can subscribe. [Subscribe here.](#)

*AFCC members are free to share eNEWS content.*

#### EDITOR:

[Ann Ordway, JD, PhD](#)

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

[Patrick Sommer](#)



Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) | 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719

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## **We Can Do Better: Establishing On-Ramps for Unmarried Fathers to Court-Connected Parenting Time Services & Orders**

*By Debra Pontisso, MPA, Chair, Responsible Fatherhood Roundtable*

It has been 26 years since the U.S. Commission on Child and Family Welfare submitted its final report - Parenting Our Children: In the Best Interest of the Nation - to the President and Congress in September 1996.

To the best of my professional knowledge, there hasn't been anything like it since.

At the outset, the 15 Commission Members – a few who were appointed by President Clinton and the remainder appointed by leaders of the Senate and House – chose to focus on “custody and visitation issues that affect the children of separating, divorcing and **unmarried** parents”.

After analysis, the Commission concentrated, in part, on the courts and the assistance they can or should provide to families for ensuring that children receive the emotional and financial support of both parents. Findings contained in the Commission Report includes recommendations for doing so and many are still relevant today. To review the full Commission Report, go to: [Parenting Our Children - Google Books](#)

Similar to the representation of the AFCC membership, the Commissioners represented a cross-section of family court judges, family law experts, academicians and researchers, mental health and domestic violence professionals, and fatherhood and family support advocates.

I was detailed from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to serve a two-year term as staff to the Commission. The Commission Report was remarkable since it included an early (for the times), national focus on the unique parenting time needs of unmarried parents during an era when the number of children born outside of marriage was increasing nationwide. The release of this report was preceded by a number of public hearings around the country. It also included consultations with national experts and various AFCC leaders in the field of alternative dispute resolution, mediation, and development of parenting plan agreements.

In retrospect, the Commission Report was prescient given that the number and percentage of children born to unmarried biological parents annually has grown exponentially since this report was released.

With few exceptions, unmarried parents do not have an automatic, institutional on-ramp to court-connected parenting time services and orders as compared to divorcing parents. Without a court order, unmarried fathers do not have the legal basis to pursue parenting time with their children particularly in those situations when the mother refuses access. The lack of a court-connected institutional “trigger” is missing for millions of unmarried parents by virtue of their non-marital status.

There are various other obstacles to unmarried parents - especially fathers - petitioning the court for a parenting time order or agreement and they include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lack of financial resources to hire an attorney;
- Lack of awareness of the need to file a separate petition to obtain parenting time and/or the need for information or “hands on” support on how to file a pro se petition for parenting time;
- Intimidated by the complexity of the court process and the cost of filing a separate petition for parenting time; and/or
- Deterred from petitioning the court for a parenting time order due to previous involvement with the criminal justice system.

All of the above has contributed to father absence or noninvolvement in the lives of their children and, in far too many instances, has adversely impacted child well-being outcomes (emotional, social and financial).

### **Dramatic Changes in Family Formation Nationwide**

In 1990 and around the time of the convening of the U.S. Commission, approximately 28% of all live births were to unmarried parents.

Since this time, nonmarital births have increased dramatically across the country. In 2020, 40.5% or 1.4 million live births nationwide were to unmarried mothers. This percentage and number have been relatively consistent for the past 18 years. Changes in family formation, in this instance, extends across all racial groups although the percentage of nonmarital births - by race - is higher for Blacks and Latinos. However, the gross number of nonmarital births is higher for Whites as shown in the chart below:

<b>2020*</b>	<b>Total No. of Non-Marital Births</b>	<b>Percentage of Non-Marital Births by Race</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>1.5 million (or 40.5% of all live births)</b>	
White	523,347	28.5
Black	373,130	70.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	18,659	69.6
Asian	26,777	12.2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5,007	52.0
Hispanic	457,978	52.8

**\*Source:** Unmarried Childbearing, National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 70, No. 17, February 7, 2022



The implications of this data are enormous. The net result is that on any given day it is safe to assume that many of the nation's 18+ million minor age children born to unmarried parents may be struggling with the social, emotional, and economic consequences of their parents' nonmarital status and separation.

Let me be clear. I'm not passing judgment on nonmarital childbearing. I was an unmarried mother myself. However, I was the recipient of an array of court-connected parenting and alternative dispute resolution services which made all the difference in the world. In the end, these services resulted in an engaged and healthy relationship between my daughter and her father.

### **The Child Support Factor**

In 1993, legislation was passed that required the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) – via the States - to administer and implement procedures in all hospitals/birthing centers that would provide unmarried parents with the opportunity to voluntarily sign a paternity affidavit establishing a father's legal paternity. This measure has been wildly successful and has dramatically increased the number of paternities established since enactment of this provision.

However, many unmarried fathers are under the misconception that signing the paternity affidavit entitles them to full legal parenting time rights and access to their children. It does not. It does, however, establish the basis for a child support order in the instance an unmarried mother files for child support or is required to name the biological father in applying for public assistance (TANF).

For unmarried fathers/parents, child support does not provide a pathway to securing a legal parenting time order or agreement since funds can only be used for: 1) locating noncustodial parents; 2) establishing paternity; 3) establishing and enforcing support orders; 4) modifying orders when appropriate; and 5) collecting and disbursing child support payments.

Parenting time issues and agreements are not allowable activities for regular federal funds, although the preamble to the 2016 Child Support Modernization Rule states that regular child support funds can be used to coordinate child support orders with parenting time agreements as long as the staff time involved is kept to

a minimum (“de minimus”) and the parents agree on the parenting time arrangement (Federal Register, 2016)

In general, fathers with child support orders complain that even though they are paying child support, they are denied access to their children by gatekeeper mothers. This is particularly true for unmarried fathers without a legal parenting time order.

Of all the federal family support programs, child support could be a gateway for unmarried parents to, at a minimum, voluntarily establish a legal parenting time order at the point when a child support order is being established. While accomplishing this goal would require a change in the child support statute that would make parenting time an allowable and fundable service activity, some immediate improvements could be achieved by taking advantage of the “de minimus” provision in the 2016 Child Support Modernization rule by using regular funds for child support personnel to inquire about and adopt agreed-upon parenting time arrangements when establishing child support orders.

The Obama Administration included this legislative change (i.e., making parenting time services an allowable and fundable child support activity) in consecutive annual budget proposals to Congress for enactment. Unfortunately, it was not authorized largely because funding for the federal Department of Health and Human Services (and other federal agencies) was provided through a continuing resolution.

The federal/state child support program has a built-in portal to the courts since establishing and enforcing support orders are filed in the court (judicial or administrative procedure). The child support program has access to large numbers of unmarried parents that are often invisible to or lack a pathway to court-connected parenting time services.

According to 2018 data contained in a federal report entitled “Characteristics of Custodial Parents and Their Children: Who Receives Child Support Services and Who Doesn’t” by Elaine Sorenson, the nation’s child support program caseload was comprised of 10.6 million custodial parents and 16.9 million children

Additional report highlights include: (Note: percentages do not always sum to 100% due to rounding)

- Marital Status: 41% of custodial parents who received child support services were never married, 30% divorced, 17% married, 11% separated, and 1% widowed;
- Legal Visitation Agreements: 36% of custodial parents who had a child support order had a legal visitation agreement with the noncustodial parent; 64% did not;
- Noncustodial Parent-Child Contact: 35% of noncustodial parents spent at least 52 days with their youngest custodial child; another 30% spent some time with their child but less than 52 days; and 36% did not spend any time with their child according to custodial parents receiving child support services; and
- Single Parent Families & Poverty: over 80% of custodial children who receive child support services live with their mother; 61% of children live in poverty or near poverty.

Statutory changes to the federal Child Support Enforcement program that would allow funds to be used for establishing the legal basis for parenting time orders holds the promise for effectively reaching a large but institutionally invisible group of the nation's unmarried parents and their children. Furthermore, various studies have documented a correlation between increased noncustodial parent access to children with an increase in child support payments and compliance.

### **The Need for Court-Connected On-Ramps for Unmarried Parents**

While the nation's child support program is constrained by statutorily-defined funding restrictions, the question arises as to what can courts do to create more effective pathways for unmarried fathers/parents to parenting time services? This is a question that providers of community-based services for fathers across the country struggle with and are asking on behalf of their clients with child access issues.

There exists a need to further explore this issue and to provide information on the extent to which courts and court-connected professionals can streamline procedures while creating effective outreach to ensure unmarried parents have

access to parenting time services. Taking for granted that various judicial jurisdictions may be doing work in this area the fact remains that unmarried parents are much less likely than divorced parents to have a parenting time order.

I am appealing to the AFCC and its membership to consider steps for exploring ways to establish “parent-friendly” on-ramps for unmarried parents to court-connected parenting time services.

This could be accomplished a number of ways, such as:

- 1) Improving coordination between juvenile courts that frequently handle child support order establishment cases and family courts or domestic relations divisions that typically handle parenting time matters so that unmarried parents can more easily address their parenting time needs in conjunction with the establishment or modification of child support orders at the court;
- 2) Extending existing court-based and court-affiliated education, mediation and supervised visitation services to unmarried parents who are engaged in establishing child support orders and interested in establishing parenting time arrangements;
- 3) Waiving filing fees for parenting time petitions for unmarried parents who establish child support orders and are interested in obtaining parenting time orders;
- 4) Coordinating court-based and court-affiliated parenting time services with those offered through the federal Grants to States for Access and Visitation (AV Grant) to better leverage the resources available in both and to provide more effective outreach to unmarried parents.

**Note:** The AV grant is housed within OCSE and is a stand-alone program which means that it is not under the aegis of child support enforcement. The statutory goal of the AV Grant program is to enable states to provide services that “increase noncustodial parents access to or visitation with their children.” It has been operating since 1997 with an annual budget of \$10 million divided among all states, the District of Columbia, and three trust territories based on a statutorily defined funding formula. While available funds for AV grant services fall well below the demand nationwide, the majority of states have chosen to focus on the unmet child access needs of low-income unmarried parents. Conversely, AFCC is

the organization that encompasses a collective expertise in the field of parenting time, alternative dispute resolution, mediation, development of parenting plan agreements, parenting education among other specialties that would benefit federal and state administrators of the AV Grant program. A working relationship between AFCC and federal/state AV Grant administrators is highly recommended; and

- 5) Convening national and state-level meetings between and among entities that address the child support and parenting time issues that unmarried families face including family and juvenile courts that hear parenting time and child support matters, child support programs, parenting time services and the AV Grant program.

Another option is for AFCC and/or the courts to collaborate with the federal, state, or local child support program officials on developing creative pathways and services for unmarried parents. There is no child support prohibition that I am aware of that would prevent, for example, child support agencies from distributing information on court-connected contacts or procedures for parenting time services. Nor do I think it would be a problem if court-connected personnel were to independently help or advise unmarried parents interested in parenting time services on-site at the child support agency. In fact, I'm not sure it's ever been tried!

In the end what unites us is our shared commitment to improving child and family well-being outcomes and, in this instance, accomplishing this goal through the lens of father involvement.

The challenge is to recognize that we can and should do more because *Parenting Our Children is in the Best Interest of the Nation!*

Happy Father's Day!

For additional information, go to:

<https://www.frpn.org/asset/parenting-time-and-child-support-information-fatherhood-programs-and-fathers>

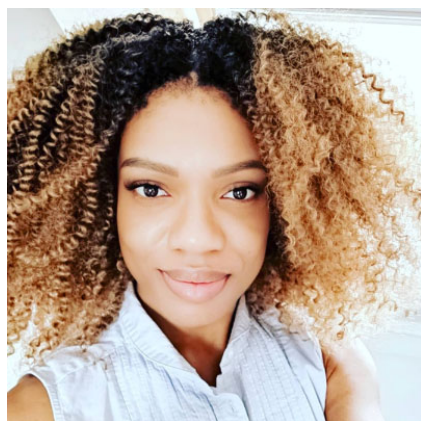
<https://www.frpn.org/asset/policies-and-programs-affecting-fathers-state-state-report-chapter-8-family-law>

**Debra Pontisso, MPA**, began her 33-year career with the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in 1979 and, at the time of her retirement in 2012, she had been working in the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) managing the [Child] Access and Visitation Grant – a \$10 million per year program authorized by Congress based on the goal of increasing noncustodial parents’ access to and visitation with their children.



During her tenure with HHS, she held various positions in the Administration on Aging, Office of Community Services (anti-poverty and community development programs), and Office of Refugee Resettlement. She also served as Associate Director of the U.S. Commission on Child and Family Well-being (1994-1996) which involved holding public hearings throughout the country and preparing a Report to Congress and the President which contained recommendations for removing the obstacles to and increasing the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. Ms. Pontisso currently serves as Chair of the Responsible Fatherhood Roundtable.

## AFCC 2022-2023 Training Team



**Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP**, is a private practitioner in New York State and the owner of Forensic Psych Solutions. The focus of her practice is forensic evaluations and child/adolescent therapy. Dr. Ajoku graduated cum laude from Dartmouth College with a BA in Psychological and Brain Sciences. She then obtained a dual degree, MA/JD (psychology/law), from Duke University and Duke University School of Law, and was admitted to the NYS Bar. She subsequently obtained her PhD in Clinical Psychology from the CUNY Graduate Center via the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Additionally, Dr. Ajoku completed her clinical internship year at Rutgers University in Piscataway as the Adolescent Forensic Track intern. Afterward, she completed a Child and Family Forensic Postdoctoral Fellowship at William James College. Dr. Ajoku is licensed to practice psychology in New York State. Currently, she serves on the Mental Health Professionals Certification Committee for the First and Second Judicial Departments of New York. She also serves on the AFCC Continuing Education Committee, the AFCC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and the board of AFCC-NY.



**Debra K. Carter, PhD**, is a psychologist and parenting coordinator who has provided training across the globe. She chaired the AFCC Task Force that developed the 2019 Guidelines for Parenting Coordination. She is the author of numerous book chapters and articles including Parenting Coordination: A Practical Guide for Family Law Professionals. She is also the Co-Founder and Training Director of the National Cooperative Parenting Center (NCPC) which offers services to the mental health and legal communities in North America and around the globe and is a former president of the AFCC Florida Chapter.



**Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP**, is a psychologist and former AFCC President, who served on both the first AFCC task force and the APA task force that developed Guidelines for Parenting Coordination. She has provided training internationally and authored chapters and articles about parenting coordination, as well as other issues related to family conflict. She was the founder and the Director of the Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law at the William James College where she developed the Certificate in Child and Family Forensic Issues. From 1990 until 2012 she was on the faculty of Harvard Medical School, most recently as an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology.



**April Harris-Britt, PhD**, is a licensed psychologist and parent coordinator who conducts child and adult psychological evaluations, child custody evaluations, civil guardian ad litem evaluations, and parental competency evaluations. Dr. Harris-Britt provides training to mental health professionals, attorneys, and judges and has presented at numerous conferences regarding services for families engaged in high-conflict custody disputes. She is currently a member of the Board for the Center for Cooperative Parenting, APA Advocacy Coordinating Committee, APA Working Group to Review Scientific Literature for High Conflict Family Relationships, AFCC Task Force on Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluations, and AFCC Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.



**Kate McNamara, PhD** is a psychologist in private practice in Fort Collins, Colorado. She received her master's in counseling from Ohio State and doctorate in counseling psychology from Penn State. She was a tenured associate professor of psychology at Colorado State University before devoting herself to full-time practice. She specializes in working with high conflict families. Dr. McNamara is a past president of the Colorado Chapter of AFCC and remains involved in program planning and chapter development. She also serves on the AFCC Resource Development committee, Chapters committee, and Continuing Education for Psychologists committee. She is a past chair and current member of the Colorado Psychological Association Ethics Committee.





**Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA**, is a Licensed Psychologist specializing in complex custody evaluations and cases with child abuse allegations. She provides training on the use of expert witnesses in child abuse and divorce cases, effective interviewing techniques with children, interventions in high-conflict divorce, and the impact of psychological trauma. She served on the AFCC task force that developed the 2019 Guidelines for Parenting Coordination, the AFCC Task Force on Guidelines for Court-Involved Therapy and was co-chair of the Minnesota Child-Focused Parenting Time Guide Working Group. She is President Elect of AFCC.



**John A. Moran, PhD**, is a licensed forensic/clinical psychologist with 35 years of experience serving as a court-appointed expert. He is on the Board of Directors of Overcoming Barriers, Inc., (OCB) and served as clinical director of three OCB residential family camps. He organizes multi-day intensive interventions for families responding to parent child contact problems. He is the author of two books - *Overcoming the Coparenting Trap: Essential Skills When a Child Resists a Parent*, and *Overcoming the Alienation Crisis: 33 Coparenting Solutions*. He has authored articles and chapters for professional publications and provides training to behavioral health professionals, attorneys and judges at local, regional, and national conferences. He is past president of the Arizona Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.



**Shely Polak, PhD**, is a registered social worker and accredited family mediator. She is the director of a private practice specializing in forensic clinical services including parenting plan evaluations, family mediation, voice of the child reports, parenting coordination, and other therapeutic services for children and families impacted by divorce in Toronto, Canada. Shely serves as adjunct faculty at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. She currently sits as President of the AFCC — Ontario Chapter.



**Sol R. Rappaport, PhD, ABPP**, is a Board Certified psychologist in Clinical Psychology and Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. He has been appointed in over 900 custody evaluations and has testified throughout the United States. Dr. Rappaport's national practice includes consulting with attorneys for the purpose of work product review, cross-examination and expert witness testimony. Dr. Rappaport has presented nationally on custody, relocation, alienation, intimate partner violence, autism, psychological testing and other topics to various organizations, including the ABA, AAML, AFCC, and several state bar associations. Dr. Rappaport has published in the area of divorce, child abuse, psychological testing, gatekeeping, custody evaluations, as well as other topics.



**Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD**, has been on three AFCC Parenting Coordination task forces and is an internationally recognized author and trainer in this area of practice. He co-chaired the AFCC Task Force on Guidelines for Court-Involved Therapy and served on the American Psychological Association Ethics Committee. He was awarded the 2012 Joseph Drown award by the California Chapter of AFCC for outstanding service to children and families. He is the immediate past-president of the AFCC.



**Stephanie Tabashneck, PsyD, JD**, is a psychologist and attorney in Boston. Her practice areas include forensic psychological assessment, substance use issues, child custody, and criminal forensic evaluations. Dr. Tabashneck presents regionally and nationally on psychology and law topics, including at events organized by the American Bar Association, the Federal Judicial Center, the American Psychiatric Association, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the Massachusetts Trial Courts, and the New York Office of Attorneys for Children.



**Nancy Ver Steegh, JD**, is a professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law where she teaches courses on family law, domestic violence, and mediation. Her scholarship explores domestic violence in the context of child-related decision making and the implications for dispute resolution processes. She was a consultant to the Battered Women's Justice Project on the development of the SAFeR system. She serves on the editorial board of the Family Court Review and is a past president of AFCC.

## **The Fundamentals of Parenting Coordination**

**December 5-8, 2022**

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP

Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD

Debra K. Carter, PhD

Shely Polak, PhD

## **Advanced Issues in Child Custody**

**January 17-19, 2023**

Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA

Stephanie Tabashneck, PsyD, JD

John A. Moran, PhD

Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP

Nancy Ver Steegh, JD

## **The Fundamentals of Conducting Parenting Plan Evaluations**

**March 13-16, and March 20-22, 2023**

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP

Sol Rappaport, PhD, ABPP

April Harris-Britt, PhD

Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP

Kathleen McNamara, PhD