



Improving the lives of children and families
through the resolution of family conflict



September 2019
VOL. 14 No. 9

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Register for the AFCC Fall Conference! Integrating Research into Practice and Policy: The Impact on Families and Children

October 31-November 2, 2019
Omni William Penn Hotel
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Early bird pricing ends September 30th

Register now and save! Early bird prices are available through the end of this month. [Register online](#) or call 608-664-3750.

Don't forget to reserve your hotel room!

The Omni William Penn is offering AFCC attendees a special rate of \$155 per night for single or double occupancy. **Rooms frequently sell out before the room block is released. We encourage you to make your reservation early!** Make your reservation by calling 800-843-6664 and mentioning the group code AFCC or [reserve online](#). The block will be released on October 8, 2019.

Exhibit and advertise at the conference

Exhibiting with AFCC is a great way to share your products and services with an interdisciplinary community of dedicated family law professionals. Exhibit space is limited and filling up. [Read the prospectus](#) and reserve your space today by contacting Gina Wentling at gwentling@afccnet.org or at 608-664-3750.

AFCC Fall Conference



**Integrating Research into
Practice and Policy:**
The Impact on Families and Children



October 31–November 2, 2019
Omni William Penn Hotel
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

AFCC 57th Annual Conference



Submit your proposal by
October 2, 2019.

AFCC Training Programs

University of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

Register Today!

Child Protection Mediation (CPM) Model Mediator Competencies Available Now

The AFCC Board of Directors recently reviewed and endorsed the [Child Protection Mediation Model Mediator Competencies](#) at its annual meeting in May 2019. The CPM Model Mediator Competencies were developed by a diverse group of experts in the field of Child Protection Mediation. The Model Competencies identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities of effective CPM mediators. These Model Competencies provide a road map to create and deliver quality training with the goal that a skilled mediator will demonstrate these competencies on a regular and consistent basis.

Mediators and their programs may use model competencies to assess and enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities through mentoring, supervision, self-study, and self-assessment. The members of the CPM Model Mediator Competencies workgroup are: Laura Bassein, JD; Kelly Browe Olson, JD; Gregory Firestone, PhD; Marilou Giovannucci, MS; and Susan Storcel, JD.

Learn More

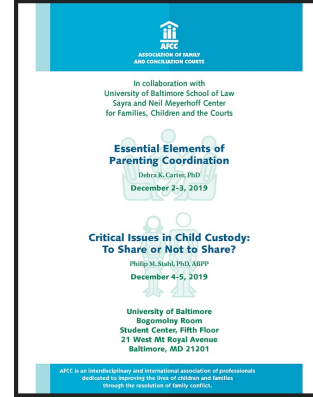
Ask the Experts

Top Tips for Parents on Early Intervention to Ensure Co-Parenting Success

Adam Colthorpe, Dads Unlimited, Ashford, England

In the last 20 years, researchers have identified the effects of parental conflict on children's mental and physical health, school achievement, and employment opportunities. Children who are exposed to persistent and unresolved parental conflict are at a greater risk of early emotional and behavioural problems. Parenting programmes that incorporate the couple's relationship seem to be more successful. One program offering guided discussion of parenting and relationship issues to parents of pre-schoolers over the course of 16 weeks had positive effects on parent-child relationships, children's adjustment to school, couple interaction quality, and couples' conflict levels. Positive effects were modest, but some persisted 10 years after the program took place.

Read More



Essential Elements of Parenting Coordination

Debra K. Carter, PhD
December 2-3, 2019

Critical Issues in Child Custody To Share or Not to Share?

Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP
December 4-5, 2019

AFCC Chapter Conferences

Florida Chapter Annual Conference

September 26-27, 2019
Orlando, Florida

Maryland Chapter Annual Conference

September 27, 2019
Hyattsville, Maryland

Indiana Chapter Annual Conference

October 4, 2019
Indianapolis, Indiana

Wisconsin 2019 Annual Conference

October 4, 2019
Pewaukee, Wisconsin

Colorado Chapter Annual Conference

October 11-13, 2019
Breckenridge, Colorado

Illinois Chapter Annual Conference

October 11, 2019
Chicago, Illinois

Ontario Chapter Annual Conference

October 18, 2019
Hamilton, ON, Canada

When a Child Rejects a Parent: Are We Part of the Problem or the Solution?

May 27-30, 2020

New Orleans Marriott

Submit a proposal today!

AFCC is accepting proposals for 90-minute workshop sessions. Proposals must be submitted using the [online form](#). **Proposals are due no later than Wednesday, October 2, 2019.** [View the call for proposals.](#)

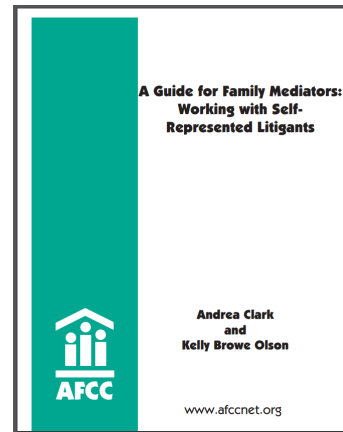
Exhibit, Sponsor, or Advertise with AFCC!

The [exhibitor prospectus](#) for New Orleans is now available! Learn more about reserving exhibit space, advertising in the conference brochure, or sponsoring the conference at any level.

Confirming early lets you take advantage of lower prices, better table location, and more! Don't miss out on your chance to promote your business to AFCC members!

[Learn More](#)

Resource of the Month



AFCC Webinar Corner

Special Needs Children: A Risk Assessment Model for Developing Parenting Plans

Daniel B. Pickar, PhD, ABPP

October 16, 2019

1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US

Registration closes on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 9:00am Eastern Time.

Family courts have seen a dramatic rise in children diagnosed with various types of neurodevelopmental, psychiatric and medical syndromes. Commonly recommended developmentally-based parenting plans may be inappropriate with many special needs children; therefore, family court professionals face complex challenges in crafting appropriate parenting plans. This webinar will focus on three of the most frequently encountered types of childhood conditions: autistic spectrum disorders, ADHD, and depressive disorders. Presented will be a systematic approach to analyzing the risk and protective factors that should inform parenting plan arrangements with this varied population.



Daniel B. Pickar, PhD, ABPP is board-certified child psychologist who conducts child custody evaluations, mediation, consultation to family law attorneys, and psycho-educational evaluations of children. He has published numerous journal articles and book chapters in the areas of child custody evaluation, mediation, special needs children in divorce, and served on the editorial board of the Journal of Child Custody for 6 years. He regularly presents workshops at state and national AFCC and AAML conferences, and serves on both the conference and continuing education committees of AFCC.

Registration

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$50

Certificate of Attendance

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$20

Attendees may purchase a certificate of attendance along with their registration. No refunds or credits will be issued for webinar cancellations.

Webinars will be archived as a member benefit, for personal use only. These can be found in the Member Center on our website. If you are not currently a member, join when you register to get \$10 off your first annual membership as well as webinar registration at the member price.

[Register today!](#)

Training Programs on Parenting Coordination and Critical Issues in Child Custody

*University of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland*

Essential Elements of Parenting Coordination

Debra K. Carter, PhD

December 2-3, 2019

This training program presents a comprehensive overview of the definition, role, responsibilities, and function of the parenting coordinator. Parenting coordination is an out-of-court dispute resolution process designed to assist coparents in managing parenting disputes, minimize litigation, and shield the children from harmful interparental conflict. The integrated model of parenting coordination highlights factors leading to entrenched child-related disputes, the pathways and personalities that lead parents to enduring conflict, and specialized interventions to address intractable conflict.

Critical Issues in Child Custody

Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP

December 4-5, 2019

Developing parenting plans for separating and divorcing parents has become increasingly complex in recent years as new statutes, court rules, programs, practices, and research come to light. Is shared parenting always best for children? What about 50/50 presumptions? What is the impact of domestic violence or high conflict? What happens when one parent relocates or when special needs children are involved?

[Register now!](#)

Member News

Judge Thomas Trent Lewis, AFCC member in Los Angeles, California and supervising judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court's Family Law Division, announced that he will retire from the bench on December 18, 2019. Anyone who knows Thom knows that he intends to remain fully active in the family law field and looks forward to spending time with his wife, his two children, and his four grandchildren.

Judge Lewis has been a family law judge since his appointment to the Superior Court in 2006 by then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. From 2011-14, he was assistant supervising judge of the Family Law Division. His awards include the California Lawyer's Association Family Law Judge of the Year Award, 2018; the Association of Family Law Specialist Hall of Fame Award, 2018; the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, Stanley Mosk Legacy of Justice Award, 2017; the Los Angeles County Bar Association Family Law Section Spencer Brandeis Award, 2015; and the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, California Chapter, Outstanding Jurist Award, 2010.



He is a past president of the California Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. Congratulations, Thom!

Ron Silikovitz, PhD, AFCC member in West Orange, New Jersey and Founder and First President of AFCC's New Jersey chapter, is one of five psychologists awarded the New Jersey Psychological Association (NJPA) Lifetime Achievement Award. This award, the association's highest honor, recognizes exceptional leadership in the form of enduring and exemplary contributions to NJPA, over a sustained period of time that, collectively, significantly enhanced the association's ability to positively impact the lives and careers of its membership, as well as advancing the field of psychology in New Jersey, and beyond. The award will be presented at the New Jersey Psychological Association Fall Conference on November 1, 2019. Congratulations, Ron!



Do you have a professional achievement to share? Email Gina Wentling at gwentling@afccnet.org with your story and a professional head shot (JPEG or PNG preferred), if you have one, to be featured in next month's Member News!

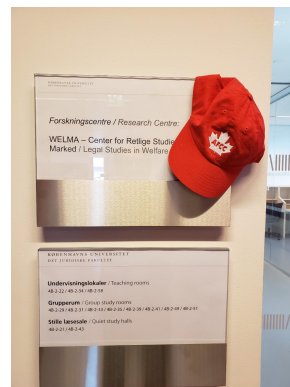
Where in the World is AFCC?

AFCC's hats can be found in all corners of the globe! Have a fall trip planned? Please post your picture in an AFCC hat (any version is fine) on social media using [#AFCCChats](https://twitter.com/AFCCChats) [#whereintheworldisAFCC](https://www.facebook.com/afccnet). See [our Facebook album](#) to view all AFCC hat pictures.

If you email your photo to AFCC, you will be entered into next year's contest and we will add the photo to AFCC social media posts and our Facebook album. Just email your photo to afcc@afccnet.org with a subject line "AFCC hats."

Qualifying photos must include a visible AFCC hat. The contest winner will be announced at AFCC's next annual conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, which will take place May 27-30, 2020. We hope to see you there!

See examples from AFCC members below!



The "Bronze Fonz" in
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

An anonymous AFCC
member in Copenhagen,
Denmark

Katina Kavassalis and her
husband Ferdi at Lake
Moraine in Alberta, Canada

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, case law and research updates, international news, and the latest initiatives in family law and conflict resolution. The *AFCC eNEWS* is free and you do not need to be a member of AFCC to subscribe. [Subscribe here.](#)

AFCC members are free to share eNEWS content.

EDITOR:

[Leslye Hunter](#)

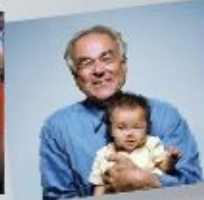
ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

[Gina Wentling](#)





ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY AND
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

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Ask the Experts:

Top Tips for Parents on Early Intervention to Ensure Co-Parenting Success

Adam Colthorpe, Dads Unlimited, Ashford, England

In the last 20 years, researchers have identified the effects of parental conflict on children's mental and physical health, school achievement, and employment opportunities. Children who are exposed to persistent and unresolved parental conflict are at a greater risk of early emotional and behavioural problems. Parenting programmes that incorporate the couple's relationship seem to be more successful. One program offering guided discussion of parenting and relationship issues to parents of pre-schoolers over the course of 16 weeks had positive effects on parent-child relationships, children's adjustment to school, couple interaction quality, and couples' conflict levels. Positive effects were modest, but some persisted 10 years after the program took place.

Dads Unlimited in the UK (<https://www.DadsUnltd.org.uk>) has been funded to research and develop a universal Co-parenting Programme to improve the lives of the children of separated parents through equipping separated parents with the skills, knowledge, and perspective to co-parent successfully. Here are some tips to share with parents for effective co-parenting.

Focus on the children

Whatever advice you read here, whatever advice the ever-helpful friends, advisers, and family offer you, remember this one thing; focus on the children. Whatever actions you take you must always be certain that your children are safe, and their welfare is of the utmost importance.

Being child-centric (good) is not the same as being child-first (not always good). Remember it is your role as parents to nurture and grow these little human beings. Focus on producing a great, well-balanced child.

Recognise Responsibility

You have a responsibility as a co-parent, as an adult, as a parent. The school is not there to parent or referee. Babies don't come out with an actual manual for parenting. There is only opinion and best practice, and there is a lot of opinion.

The most important qualities and attitudes associated with effective parenting include: high aspirations, positive talk about education, intelligence, warmth, communicative ability, enthusiasm, and stability/continuity.

This co-parenting process is about the transition from an intimate relationship to a working relationship – because that’s what you need to have now; a working relationship whereby you are both working towards a common goal – a healthy and happy, successful, well-adjusted child.

Practice Self-care

Any relationship breakdown is difficult, as you are disentangling two lives that were brought together, and in the case of a separated family, you have a shared child which means that your lives will continue to be entwined in some way.

Look after your mental and physical health. You can’t pour from an empty cup; and you have that little human to look after – you need to be the best version of you.

Remember Perspective

If you picture your child in the centre of this new interconnected family structure, you can see that as one or both of you get a new partner, arrangements now affect a larger group of people. And if your new partner has an ex-partner with whom they had a child, then your child is now part of a much bigger interconnected family and each impact is felt more widely – in both directions. If you both have new partners with children from previous relationships then your child is now part of a much larger and complex network of adults and children, half-siblings and potentially enough grandparents to have to start using their surnames as well.

Your child has more family than you have – and all parts of their family form part of their identity. Don’t negatively affect your child’s identity.

Take a Collaborative Approach: It's not a seesaw

No one is keeping score. No one adds up the points at the end of the day, the week, the month and awards a special trophy for being the best parent, or having the winning argument, or being the most “right”. If your ex-partner does something amazing - that does not mean you are not amazing.

Positive co-parenting is not binary; it's not winner versus loser or good parent versus bad parent. Co-parenting is complimentary and parallel. You both have the ultimate opportunity to be the best parents.

Be Realistic

Love is not finite. Your child can love both of you unconditionally and the love for one parent does not impact on the love for the other parent.

But time is finite. Your child will have to share their time between their parents and potentially between their new extended and interconnected families.

Build a Positive Co-Parenting Framework

Establish and maintain routine for the children as their worlds are turning upside down. Respect each other's homes and personal space. Ensure that agreements are agreed and not dictated from one party to the other. If you cannot agree, then seek help from a neutral third-party such as a mediator. Separate finances from child arrangements – don't use access as leverage.

Create a stable agreement that is workable and not too restrictive – whilst ensuring that it is a strong enough framework to ensure no grey areas.

Allow for future flexibility. Schools change, jobs change, people change. How will an agreement for a 5-year-old work for a 14-year old?

Create a joint mission statement for your co-parenting. What qualities does the adult have that you want to have produced, nurtured, and released into the world?

Remember - what you need to have now is a working relationship whereby you are both working towards a common goal – a healthy and happy, successful, well-adjusted child. The power and responsibility are yours – both of yours.

***Dads Unlimited** is a UK charity that works to improve the lives of the children of separated parents within a healthy, positive, co-parenting environment. They provide access to practical advice on legal, financial, and emotional issues; support separated parents with parenting, and mental and physical health; and have developed a community for direct/indirect support, to decrease isolation, and to expand opportunities for children & their parents.*

Their Co-parenting Programme has been funded by the Local Government Authority to be rolled out as an early intervention programme to improve lives and relieve pressure on public services. <https://www.DadsUnltd.org.uk>

***Adam Colthorpe** is a Senior Mentor for Dads Unlimited and is the author of a co-parenting programme designed as an early intervention to help separating parents transition to the new chapter in their children's lives and is passionate about mental health and wellbeing. Adam was formerly a Sponsorship Consultant providing strategic and creative support to global brands on how to use sponsorship to integrate their marketing, sales, and employee engagement activities.*