

AFCC 16th Symposium on Child Custody

Shaping the Future:
Screening and Assessing for Safety
and Wellbeing of Parent-Child Relationships



November 14-16, 2024
COLUMBUS, OHIO
Hilton Columbus Downtown
afccnet.org

ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

16th Symposium on Child Custody Shaping the Future: Screening and Assessing for Safety and Wellbeing of Parent-Child Relationships November 14-16, 2024

Shaping the Future: Screening and Assessing for Safety and Wellbeing of Parent-Child Relationships

Layers of complicated issues often confound the transitions experienced by families navigating separation and divorce. Some issues are relatively straightforward. Others are truly perplexing, as family court professionals endeavor to consider allegations, review supporting evidence, and untangle competing narratives. Polarizing concerns have given rise to heated debate over presenting risks, and the potential for interventions that integrate safety and the preservation of parent-child relationships whenever possible. Join AFCC in Columbus, Ohio to continue transformative dialogue shaping the future of assessment, parenting plan evaluations, and family-focused interventions.

Topics Include:

- Parenting Coordination
- Mediation with IPV Dynamics
- Impact of Emerging Practice Legislation
- Interventions for Parent-Child Contact Problems
- Coercive Control
- Cross-Allegations of IPV and PCCP
- Diversity/Culture and Parenting Time
- Screening/Assessment for IPV
- Screening/Assessment of PCCP Dynamics
- Multidisciplinary Teamwork
- Voice of the Child in High Conflict Cases

Presenting Sponsor



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About the Symposium

AFCC strives to offer a wide range of symposium sessions highlighting various research, advocacy positions, policies, practices, programs, procedures, and ideas. Some programs may be evidence-based while others may report on works in progress, emerging practices, or policy initiatives. The goal of the symposium is to enhance learning while encouraging respectful inquiries, discussions, and debates congruent with AFCC's organizational values. AFCC does not necessarily endorse or support the views of the symposium's presenters.

Join AFCC Today

AFCC brings together members of multiple disciplines from around the world to promote greater understanding of the many perspectives in family law, mental health, and dispute resolution. An AFCC membership is an investment in professional excellence, with immediate access to new information and ideas amongst a network of family law innovators.

When you join AFCC along with your conference registration, you save \$10 on your first year's membership and up to \$115 on your registration.

Select "First-Time Member Special" when completing the registration form or at afccnet.org.

AFCC Member Benefits Include:

- **Family Court Review**, AFCC's quarterly academic and research journal in electronic format, with full access to the online archives back to 1963
- **Online member directory** of nearly 6,000 colleagues worldwide
- **Substantial member discounts** on registration for AFCC conferences and trainings, AFCC webinars, exhibit and advertising opportunities, and additional publications from Wiley-Blackwell
- **Free webinars!** AFCC members have access to a library of previously recorded webinars with over 60 webinars on topics such as interviewing children, DE&I issues, opioid misuse, and more. Members can also attend live webinars for only \$15
- **Parenting Coordination Network Listserv** for AFCC members who are PCs or are interested in the role to share tips, advice, and referrals, and to network with others

afccnet.org

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Schedule at a Glance

AFCC 16th Symposium on Child Custody

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

6:00pm-8:00pm Registration

Thursday, November 14, 2024

7:30am-5:15pm Registration
7:30am-5:15pm Exhibit Forum
7:45am-8:45am Coffee and Rolls
for Institute Registrants
Pre-Symposium Institutes
8:45am-4:45pm
10:15am-10:30am Break
12:00pm-1:30pm Lunch (On Your Own)
3:15pm-3:30pm Break
5:15pm-6:45pm Opening Session
6:45pm-7:45pm Welcome Reception

Friday, November 15, 2024

6:15am-7:15am Yoga and Meditation
7:30am-5:00pm Registration
7:30am-5:00pm Exhibit Forum
7:45am-8:30am Coffee and Rolls
8:30am-10:00am Plenary Session
10:00am-10:30am Break
10:30am-12:00pm Workshops 1-6
12:00pm-1:30pm Luncheon (Included)
1:45pm-3:15pm Workshops 7-12
3:15pm-3:30pm Break
3:30pm-5:00pm Workshops 13-18
Evening Taste of Columbus

Saturday, November 16, 2024

6:15am-7:15am Yoga and Meditation
7:30am-3:00pm Registration
7:30am-3:00pm Exhibit Forum
7:45am-8:30am Coffee and Rolls
8:30am-10:00am Workshops 19-24
10:00am-10:30am Break
10:30am-12:00pm Workshops 25-30
12:00pm-1:30pm Lunch (On Your Own)
1:30pm-3:00pm Workshops 31-36

16th Symposium on Child Custody

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024

7:30am-5:15pm	Registration
7:30am-5:15pm	Exhibit Forum
7:45am-8:45am	Coffee and Rolls
8:45am-4:45pm	Pre-Symposium Institutes*

1. Advanced Parenting Plan Evaluations

This institute is designed for those who have attended AFCC's child custody evaluation online training program or another introductory training program of twelve hours or more. Part one of the institute will focus on report writing, with participants working in small groups to develop multiple hypotheses and recommendations for a custody evaluation report. Part two will explore trial practice, and presenters will lead an in-depth discussion and practice on preparation and testifying in court. If you wish to attend this program and have not met the training criteria, you can purchase the previously recorded AFCC online training program, [The Fundamentals of Conducting Parenting Plan Evaluations](#), to view in advance at afccnet.org or by contacting AFCC at 608-664-3750.

Arnold T. Shienbold, PhD, Riegler, Shienbold & Assoc., Harrisburg, PA

April Harris-Britt, PhD, AHB Forensic and Consulting Services, PLLC, Durham, NC

Larry S. Fong, PhD, Calgary, AB, Canada

2. Advance Orientation Improves Ecological Validity in PPEs

Research across many fields demonstrates that when consumers participate in an advance orientation (AO) they are more satisfied with the service, the service is likely to be more efficient and effective, and there are many fewer complaints about the provider. This program introduces AO to family law. Participants learn to distinguish AO from informed consent and from coaching. Preliminary data documenting the value of AO for parenting plan evaluations (PPE) are discussed. The programs available via DefuseDivorce.com are introduced as an example of what AO looks like in practice.

Benjamin D. Garber, PhD, Family Law Consulting, Nashua, NH

Chris Mulchay, PhD, ABPP, Asheville Testing, Asheville, NC

Fannie Locat, PhD(c), Univ. of Quebec at Trois-Rivières, Trois-Rivières, QC, Canada

Simon Carrier, PhD(c), Univ. of Quebec at Trois-Rivières, Trois-Rivières, QC, Canada

3. Advanced Issues in Mediation

This interactive institute will include a discussion of a variety of issues, dynamics, techniques, and approaches that have impacted mediation practice. Topics will include: family-focused mediation, addressing differing parenting styles, PCCP, the role of GALs, protocols and safe practices in cases with IPV dynamics and others! The panel will introduce Settlement Week, a court managed program that has reduced court backlog through mediation and offer tips for setting up such a program in other jurisdictions. From niche solutions to case management to AI, learn also about the next wave of technology tools to adapt and integrate into mediation practice.

Moderator: Marya Cody Kolman, JD, Supreme Court of Ohio, Columbus, OH

Christy Cumberlander Walker, MPA, Clark Co. Child Protective Services, Las Vegas, NV

Wendi Stern, MBA, The Center for Family Resolution, Worthington, OH

Amy Armstrong, LISW-S, Columbus, OH

Gary Doernhoefer, JD, ADR Notable, Columbus, OH

Magistrate Larry McQuain, Delaware Co. Domestic Relations Court, Delaware, OH

4. No Professional is an Island: How to Effectively (or Successfully) Coordinate Multiple Roles in Family Court Proceedings

Join this panel for a comprehensive exploration of the diverse roles within family law cases. Discover effective strategies for coordinating these roles to promote successful outcomes for families and learn how to manage conflicts and challenges that may arise along the way. Whether you're a therapist, parenting coordinator, attorney, guardian, or case expert, this institute will focus on best practices related to confidentiality issues, understanding authorizations for information release, identifying effective team leadership to guide families, and fostering collaboration while maintaining ethical boundaries. Enhance your skills and knowledge in effectively navigating the complexities of court-involved families.

Christy Bradshaw Schmidt, MA, LPC, Coppell, TX

Victoria T. Harvey, PhD, Frisco, TX

Sandra L. Mayberry, JD, Cage & Miles, LLP, San Diego, CA

Lori A. Love, PhD, San Diego, CA

5:15pm-6:45pm **Opening Session**

Opening Session: Unintended Consequences of Coercive Control Legislation

Coercive control legislation is being enacted across the US and in other countries prompting critical questions about the implications of these new laws. While coercive control is recognized as a damaging pattern of abuse, to what extent should it be codified in family law statutes? What are the underlying assumptions and potential consequences, particularly for historically marginalized victims and communities? The opening plenary session will include a thought-provoking discussion of the multifaceted issues and context regarding this legislation trend.

Tracy Shoberg, JD, Battered Women's Justice Project, Saint Paul, MN

Anadelle M. Martinez-Mullen, JD, Battered Women's Justice Project, Saint Paul, MN

Carla R. Adkison-Johnson, PhD, Western Michigan Univ., Kalamazoo, MI

Magistrate Richard Altman (Ret.), Hicksville, OH

Moderator: Kathleen McNamara, PhD, Fort Collins, CO

6:45pm-7:45pm **Welcome Reception**

* Pre-symposium institutes require a separate registration fee.
Please see registration information on page 9.

16th Symposium on Child Custody

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2024

6:15am-7:15am **Yoga and Meditation**

7:30am-5:00pm **Registration**

7:30am-5:00pm **Exhibit Forum**

7:45am-8:45am **Coffee and Rolls**

8:30am-10:00am **Plenary Session**

Plenary Session: Including Children's Voices in Family Law Proceedings: Risks and Unintended Consequences

Hearing from children has become the directive in family law processes, giving them "a voice but not a choice." This plenary will address concerns and unintended consequences associated with involving children. The presenters will examine the risks in cases with alleged abuse and in resist-refuse cases when children speak with multiple professionals. When cases involve professionals in a variety of roles, coordination between them can limit harm to children. This plenary session will consider safety risks to the children and other family members when children are encouraged to give information that reflects negatively on their parent(s). The panelists will address helping children understand how confidentiality limits are different across professional roles and legal processes. The presenters will discuss how ethical standards and laws differ based on jurisdiction, and how this impacts the type of information that professionals may elicit.

Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA, Minneapolis, MN

Hon. Denise McColley (Ret.), Napoleon, OH

April Harris-Britt, PhD, AHB Forensic and Consulting Services, PLLC, Durham, NC

Alexander D. Jones, JD, MSW, Brick, Jones, McBrien & Hickey, LLP, Needham, MA

Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM, Univ. of Arkansas-Little Rock Bowen School of Law, Little Rock, AR

10:00am-10:30am **Break**

10:30am-12:00pm **Workshop 1-6**

1. Should I Persist When My Child Resists?

Enforcing parenting time amid resistance poses a daunting challenge. Forcing the child's compliance risks escalation, while not enforcing may signal abandonment. Conflicting advice from professionals adds chaos. When to persist or step back hinges on various factors, demanding a nuanced approach. This workshop offers a model for decision making based on expert insights and collaborative exploration. Whether a seasoned practitioner or newcomer, attendees will depart with actionable strategies for navigating the complexities of resistance to parenting time and implementing realistic interventions for the family.

Leslie Drozd, PhD, Seattle, WA

Amy Armstrong, LISW-S, Columbus, OH

2. One Court's Thoughtful Approach to Problematic Parenting

This workshop will explore programs to help parents work through disputes and to build stronger families. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, the Summit County Domestic Relations Court designed programs for parents to better understand the issues they are facing. Discussion includes details about the Working Together Program, the resources through family court Services with focus on evaluations regarding allocation of parental rights and responsibilities and Family Recovery Court.

Hon. Katarina V. Cook, Summit County Domestic Relations Court, Akron, OH

Magistrate Julie Mitrovich King, Summit County Domestic Relations Court, Akron, OH

3. A View from the Trenches: Practical Strategies for IPV and PCCP

From the premise that both IPV and PCCP exist, this workshop will provide practical guidance by offering particular legal and analytic strategies that can be useful for both legal and mental health practitioners. Legal strategies will consider a variety of budgetary realities and present options to support or defend against either or both phenomena. Mental health analytic frameworks will be presented in order to understand how concrete facts, observations, and data points can be used to analyze the presence or absence of one or both of the phenomena.

Shawn McCall, PsyD, JD, San Francisco, CA

Marcy Pasternak, PhD, Watchung, NJ

Sharon Ryan Montgomery, PsyD, Morristown, NJ

4. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Parent Coordination

Join the presenters in exploring the current challenges and resources available to the Parent Coordination process. Through the lens of both a legal and mental health perspective, the facilitators will lead a discussion providing valuable take aways to empower conflict resolution skills for the parties. The goal for this session is to build confidence in parent coordinators by providing language and creative intervention. The panelists will model techniques that support setting boundaries, delegating party responsibility, and assuring the child's wellbeing is the primary focus.

Jamie Niesen, MA, MS, Niesen Resolution Services, Worthington, OH

Alyson B. Miller, JD, Miller Bahnsen Law, Columbus, OH

5. Coercive Control: Policy and Practice in Custody Evaluations

Given its chronic nature, understanding the impact of coercive control requires a complex trauma lens. Complex trauma is the exposure to multiple or prolonged interpersonal stressors, which leads to adverse psychological and behavioral changes and vulnerability to future traumatic events. The distress may occur throughout the lifespan, resulting in psychological, emotional, and relationship difficulties. Participants will learn to identify coercive control and its impact on children and families and to assess coercive control in custody matters. Participants will also discuss the essential parameters and collaborate on a proposed model statute.

Paul J. Meller, PhD, Hofstra Univ., Hempstead, NY

Martin E. Friedlander, JD, Martin Friedlander, PC, Brooklyn, NY

Katreena L. Scott, PhD, CPsych, CREVAWC, London, ON, Canada

6. It Takes a Village – Fostering Community Partnerships Judicial Track

Principal 10 of the Cady Justice Reform Initiative discusses the importance of obtaining necessary community support and partnerships. Presenters will discuss how Johnson County community partnerships and multidisciplinary collaborations have helped provide crucial intervention services, offering families a sense of choice, empowerment, and collaboration essential for effective trauma-informed care that seeks to maximize restorative practices. Participants will leave the workshop inspired and motivated to encourage and foster community partnerships and collaboration in their local communities.

Trina A. Nudson, JD, The Layne Project, Olathe, KS

Heather Landon, MSW, JD, Landon Law, LLC, Olathe, KS

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2024

12:00pm-1:30pm Luncheon

1:45pm-3:15pm Workshops 7-12

7. Riddle Me This: How to Explore and Document Alternative Hypothesis in Parenting Plan Evaluations

Do you know about the importance of alternative hypotheses but find it difficult to effectively identify such hypotheses from the beginning of your work with a family? Do you then struggle with how best to document those hypotheses, your testing of those hypotheses, and your findings in your evaluation? If so, then this workshop is for you. Join two seasoned evaluators for an entertaining, yet practical, discussion about how to identify, explore, and clearly document alternative hypotheses in a way that supports best practice.

Victoria Harvey, PhD, Frisco, TX

Christy Bradshaw Schmidt, MA, LPC, Coppell, TX

8. 15 Years of SAFeR: A Systematic Approach to Child Custody Determinations

Families who experience intimate partner violence (IPV) benefit most from responses and interventions tailored to meet their specific needs. In this workshop, participants will learn the evidence-based and systematic SAFeR Approach to screen for and assess the nature, context, and effects of IPV, as well as reflect on 15 years of SAFeR and how it continues to evolve as the gold standard, meeting survivors where they are in their lives and demanding that the legal system, and those that practice within it, rise to meet the moment.

Tracy Shoberg, JD, Battered Women's Justice Project, Saint Paul, MN

Anadelle M. Martinez-Mullen, JD, Battered Women's Justice Project, Saint Paul, MN

9. AFCC Peace Talks: Reflecting on Progress and Engaging Feedback

The AFCC Peace Talks, launched in 2023, have been a powerful strategy in depolarizing parent-child contact problems (PCCP) issues. The talks have fostered a culture of collaborative dialogues among experts with diverse perspectives. This interactive session will build on the plenary held in June of 2024 at the AFCC 61st Annual Conference by encouraging participants to engage with presenters and reflect on key achievements and lessons learned from the AFCC Peace Talks. Participants will play a vital role in this collaborative process, engaging in meaningful discussions, sharing their feedback and experiences in the ongoing efforts to depolarize PCCP issues. The presenters are eager to gather these diverse perspectives, recognizing their importance in enhancing future peace talks. This collaborative approach is key to fostering continuous improvement and effective depolarization in family law.

William Bernet, MD, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville, TN

April Harris-Britt, PhD, AHB Forensic and Consulting Services, PLLC, Durham, NC

Peter Jaffe, PhD, Western Univ., London, ON, Canada

Hon. Denise McColley (Ret.), Napoleon, OH

Stacey E. Platt, JD, Loyola Univ. Chicago School of Law, Chicago, IL

Moderator: Michael A. Saini, PhD, Univ. of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada

10. The Role Family Law Professionals Can Play in Reducing Firearms Violence Risk

This workshop will cover current research on how children in various communities and at different ages are experiencing violence, including family, community, and gun violence, and the role family courts and professionals can play in reducing harm. Too often these issues are siloed or addressed without adequate focus on the particular needs of diverse populations or without fully leveraging conflict resolution skills family law professionals offer. Specific tools, including a new toolkit addressing the intersection of firearms and child custody cases, and promising practices will be covered to help support professionals handling cases more effectively.

Julia F. Weber, JD, MSW, San Francisco, CA

Tiffany Garner, MA, MPA, Woodridge, VA

Alicia Nichols, LSW, TruthWorks, Saint Paul, MN

11. Navigating the Emotional Tribunal of Family Law Custody Cases: Essential Techniques and Strategies for Successful Trials

From preparation to closing arguments, this workshop highlights the most important techniques, strategies, and best practices in family law custody trials. Award-winning attorneys give guidance on navigating the unique challenges in this emotionally charged area of law, how to prevail, how to manage clients, and how to provide objectivity on sensitive matters. Given this toolkit, attorneys can effectively advocate for their clients in the courtroom and provide results that help their practice thrive.

Scott Friedman, JD, Columbus, OH

Denise Mirman, JD, Columbus, OH

12. Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse in the Context of Child Custody Evaluations

Judicial Track

What happens when during the course of a child custody evaluation allegations of child sexual abuse are made? Issues such as the mental health professional's competency to conduct a child sexual abuse forensic evaluation, proper protocols to follow when evaluating allegations of child sexual abuse rising during the child custody evaluation, the issue of parental alienation, mandatory reporting laws, and the involvement of child protective services and law enforcement are some of the issues this session will address.

Lawrence Jay Braunstein, JD, Braunstein & Zuckerman, Esqs., White Plains, NY

3:15pm-3:30pm

Break

3:30pm-5:00pm

Workshops 13-18

13. I Have the Data: Now What?

This presentation is intended for evaluators and for those who rely on parenting plan evaluations such as attorneys, judicial officers, guardians ad litem, and mediators. We will focus on what to do after the data has been collected, considering how to organize and analyze the information in order to provide reliable conclusions and helpful recommendations. The presentation will consider various biases that evaluators may or may not be aware of and how to manage those biases in providing recommendations useful to attorneys and judicial officers about parenting time, including restrictions and services to maintain family members' safety.

Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA, Minneapolis, MN

James J. Street, JD, Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell, Maplewood, MN

Anna Street, JD, Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell, Maplewood, MN

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14. Ethical Integration of AI in Family Court Practice

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), offer promising opportunities to revolutionize family court proceedings. This is a workshop tailored for family law judges, lawyers, court professionals, and stakeholders, aiming to explore how AI can ethically enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility of family court processes.

Hon. Tom Altobelli, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Hon. Randall Fuller, Delaware County Common Pleas Court, Delaware, OH

Fiona Kirkman, LL.M., Sydney, NSW, Australia

15. A New Approach to Divorce: The High Complexity Docket

This workshop will outline a new approach to court docketing and dispute resolution in cases involving domestic violence, parental contact issues, mental health issues, and substance abuse issues. The workshop will include a discussion of the framework of high complexity dockets, and the reasons for the design. Docket implementation and procedure will be set forth, as well as the metrics for monitoring the docket's success.

Magistrate Amanda Holmes, Greene County Domestic Relations Court, Xenia, OH

Hon. Cynthia Martin, Greene County Domestic Relations Court, Xenia, OH

Magistrate Patricia Campbell, Greene County Domestic Relations Court, Xenia, OH

16. Transforming Forensic Family Law Training: Empowering Early Career Professionals

Join the presenters for a transformative workshop on modernizing forensic mental health training to attract young professionals to the field. Discover innovative business approaches to address the aging workforce and engage the next generation of professionals. Explore practical solutions for improving competency for early career professionals by examining established models, like the medical residency model, law firm model, and state-employed court clinician model.

Premela Deck, JD, PhD, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA

Danielle Sample, PhD, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA

Jennifer Sevigny Durand, JD, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA

Jillian Thrall, PhD, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA

17. Revisiting and Revising the Mediation Model Standards

A taskforce of AFCC and American Bar Association professionals has been examining the 2001 Model Standards for Family and Divorce Mediation and discussing updates and modifications. The panelists will review the current Model Standards, and the proposed revisions. The panelists will also discuss their work on the taskforce and its' subcommittees, new concepts, and struggles over wording. Workshop participants will be invited to provide feedback on the draft revisions and suggest additional changes. This workshop will provide attendees with an opportunity to express their opinions on the revisions and have their voices heard.

Marya Cody Kolman, JD, Supreme Court of Ohio, Columbus, OH

Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LL.M., Univ. of Arkansas-Little Rock Bowen School of Law, Little Rock, AR

Alexander D. Jones, JD, MSW, Brick, Jones, McBrien & Hickey, LLP, Needham, MA

18. Judicial Dilemmas in Cases Involving Adolescents

Judicial Track

This interactive session will focus on dilemmas that arise in custody cases involving adolescents, particularly when weighing their wishes in determining their best interests. Topics to be discussed include developmental tasks of adolescence, risks associated with this stage of life, what teens need from adults, contending with adolescent refusal, gauging maturity and independence, and balancing potential risks and benefits of various courses of action.

Kathleen McNamara, PhD, Fort Collins, CO

Stacey Platt, JD, Loyola Univ. Chicago School of Law, Chicago, IL

Friday Evening

Taste of Columbus

Join a group of 8-12 fellow conference-goers for dinner at a local restaurant. Restaurant menus and sign-up sheets will be available onsite Friday morning at the AFCC registration table. Participants are responsible for food, beverage, and transportation costs.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2024

6:15am-7:15am

Yoga and Meditation

7:30am-3:00pm

Registration

7:30am-3:00pm

Exhibit Forum

7:45am-8:30am

Coffee and Rolls

8:30am-10:00am

Workshops 19-24

19. Reimagining the Best Interests of Children: Film Screening and Workshop

Ten years after the production of SPLIT, the same 12 children reflect on growing up amidst divorce in SPLIT UP: The Teen Years. This session will open with a screening of the film followed by a discussion. Facilitators will provide practical strategies to integrate these lived experiences in an effort to help parents better manage litigation, understand the impact of their decisions, develop effective co-parenting strategies, and stay focused on their teens' long-term needs.

Ellen Bruno, MA, The SPLIT Outreach Project, San Francisco, CA

Christina McGhee, MSW, Bellville, TX

20. An e-SAFer Approach: Navigating Family Violence in Parenting Plans

Explore the web-based e-SAFer, a cutting-edge tool for family law professionals to create parenting plans within the updated scope of family violence. This guide was built collaboratively on the foundation of Canada's HELP toolkit, the RIA Risk Assessment, the Danger Assessment, and the SAFer. This session offers practical training in using e-SAFer to screen, assess, and address family violence, ensuring compliance with legal standards while safeguarding children's best interests. Join the presenters to enhance your capability in formulating dynamic, safe parenting plans that reflect the complexities of family violence.

Katreena L. Scott, PhD, CPsych, CREVAWC, London, ON, Canada

Lisa K. Heslop, PhD(c), MA, CREVAWC, London, ON, Canada

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21. Parenting Coordination and Arbitration: Monitoring for Safety and Wellbeing with Quasi-Judicial Authority

Practitioners in the neutral roles face distinct challenges when screening and assessing for safety and wellbeing in family relationships. These challenges can take on an extra layer of complexity when the practitioner's role is quasi-judicial in nature. The presenters review the scope of some neutral roles, as well as considerations and challenges when considering the safety of their client family members. Ongoing controversies regarding the rendering of recommendations and decisions, as well as the differing perspectives of the courts on the delegation of judicial authority, will be discussed. Practical strategies for screening and assessing for safety and wellbeing in family relationships will be compared to some of the lesser-discussed guidelines presented in the AFCC's Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence.

Terry Singh, PhD, ABPP, Alberta Forensic Psychology, Calgary, AB, Canada

Wayne Barkauskas, KC, Wise Scheible Barkauskas Family Law, Calgary, AB, Canada

22. Lessons From the Trenches of Reunification

Professionals dig deep to investigate the resist/refuse dynamics to rescue the child, only for the child to say they do not need to be rescued. This presentation provides a unique perspective by interviewing an adult child of an alienation dynamic to better understand how it impacted her life, causing harmful consequences in childhood and adulthood. The panelists will discuss the professional key players and need for collaboration, red flags professionals should watch for, and how professionals can help the parents where this dynamic is present.

Jennifer R. Szeghi, MA, Successful Parenting, Cincinnati, OH

Jamie Niesen, MA, MS, Niesen Resolution Services, Worthington, OH

Wendi Stern, MBA, The Center for Family Resolution, Worthington, OH

Brooke Jones, Columbus, OH

23. Integrating an Infant Mental Health Perspective in Family Court Practice

Court-involved infants and toddlers are at particular risk of early adversities and their effects on development. Based on a national model, the Strong Starts Court Initiative incorporates infant mental health expertise into the legal process and uses family court as a portal to meet children's (0-3) needs in neglect cases. Participants will learn about the infant's need for secure attachment and how to apply Strong Starts' approach to the custody context as a preventative measure to assess and strengthen the parent-child relationship and reduce further system involvement.

Kate Wurmfeld, JD, Center for Justice Innovation, New York, NY

Hon. Liberty Aldrich, (Ret.), The Children's Law Center, Brooklyn, NY

Annamarie Trialonas, LCSW, Center for Justice Innovation, New York, NY

24. Bridge Over Troubled Waters: Tearing Down Silos to Heal the Family Unit

Families navigating custody disputes must manage layers of complicated issues including the mental health of parents and children, financial concerns, cultural implications, family violence, trauma, and long-standing communication and control issues. In this workshop, participants will explore the roles of the many different professionals involved in addressing these challenges, how these professionals can or should collaborate to help the family, brainstorm new ways to think creatively about custody disputes, and address ethical considerations that may arise when professionals from different disciplines collaborate to help the family unit.

Hon. Janet Heppard, Katy, TX

Hon. Richard T. Bell, Richmond, TX

Ann E. Webb, PhD, JD, Univ. of Houston, Houston, TX

Tasha Willis, JD, LLM, Univ. of Houston Law Center, Houston, TX

10:00am-10:30am

Break

10:30am-12:00pm

Workshops 25-30

25. Advanced Issues in Child Custody Assessments

This workshop presents information not commonly considered when conducting child custody assessments. Integrating mental health and legal concepts within an evaluator's framework results in a more comprehensive and legally relevant approach to investigative activities and report writing.

Jonathan Gould, PhD, ABPP, Charlotte, NC

Chris Mulchay, PhD, ABPP, Asheville Testing, Asheville, NC

26. Reunifying Families with Mental Health Issues Involved in High Conflict Divorce

Divorce can be incredibly stressful due to the multitude of changes that families experience. How do court professionals assess the safety and well-being of a child, particularly when the child has been estranged from a parent due to intimate partner violence, allegations of physical/sexual abuse, substance use, or other mental health issues? This presentation will provide creative strategies for assessing family dynamics, as well as treatment approaches to empower children/families and foster resilience.

Ruth Ouzts Moore, MEd, PhD, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Savannah, GA

27. Reframing the Paradigm: Family Court, Parenting Plans, and Domestic Violence

This session will focus on safe and appropriate parenting plans when domestic violence is present in either a parenting case and/or protection order. Presenters will discuss Ohio's model as it answers the following questions: How do the dangerousness/lethality factors intersect with the best interest factors? How does the presence of domestic violence and the use of coercively controlling behavior detrimentally impact the meaningful allocation of parental rights and responsibilities and the enforcement of parenting time arrangements?

Alexandria M. Ruden, JD, Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH

Hon. Diane M. Palos, Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court, Cleveland, OH

28. Examining African American Young Adult Child Discipline Experiences

The disciplinary practices of African American parents are well documented in the social science literature. The type or choice of disciplinary methods are often influenced by the characteristics of the child, culture, and the wellbeing of the parent-child relationship. The purpose of this study was to explore the ways African American young adults had been disciplined by their parents during childhood. The findings from this investigation provide an important corrective to the presumption that African American parents are preoccupied with using child abusing discipline.

Carla R. Adkison-Johnson, PhD, Western Michigan Univ., Kalamazoo, MI

29. Conducting Risk Assessments in the Context of Domestic Violence

Child safety is of paramount concern for legal and mental health and legal professionals and domestic violence, and its impact on children, puts them in harm's way. Triage and risk assessments can be effective in family law cases for developing parenting plans that provide the court and families with targeted interventions and support. Risk factors, such as substance abuse, mental illness, and child maltreatment, may be contributing issues and need to be considered in a risk evaluation. In cases where child custody and placement is contested and domestic abuse is a factor, family court professionals must be able to recognize and account for abuse in recommendations to the court.

Jenna Saul, MD, *Child's Best Interests, Kenosha, WI*

Cynthia M. Lischick, PhD, LPC, *Clarksburg, NJ*

30. Building Bridges: Establishing a Dispute Resolution Department in Your Court

Creating a Dispute Resolution Department in family court is paramount in modern legal systems. Family disputes often involve highly sensitive matters where traditional litigation may exacerbate tensions and strain relationships. By establishing a specialized, comprehensive, multi-disciplinary department dedicated to providing multiple dispute resolution avenues, family courts can provide families a new and hopeful path forward in resolving conflict. This presentation explores the practical considerations of creating and integrating a department within a Court environment.

Patricia O'Malley, JD, *Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations, Cincinnati, OH*

Kimberly Kent, MSW, LISW-S, *Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations, Cincinnati, OH*

Laura Bradford, MA, LPCC, *Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations, Cincinnati, OH*

12:00pm-1:30pm

Lunch (On Your Own)

1:30pm-3:00pm

Workshops 31-36

31. Developing Individualized Best Interests Frames: Scientific and Legal Sensemaking

This workshop introduces the idea of "Best Interests Frames," a holistic model of the perspective of a party in a child custody case. The workshop will cover development of the Frames through the lens of scientific and legal sensemaking. This concept integrates research from cognitive science on sensemaking with explanatory-based reasoning models and concepts from the legal literatures, and the relative plausibility and inference to the best explanation models on evidence and judicial decision-making.

Milfred "Bud" Dale, PhD, JD, *Topeka, KS*

32. Navigating Parent-Child Contact Problems with a Risk Management Lens

This session will examine steps that mental health professionals can take to maximize family progress while aiming to minimize professional risk. This workshop will explore the crucial role of screening for Parent-Child Contact Problems (PCCP) dynamics. Participants will learn about the significance of screening for intimate partner violence and mental health conditions. This workshop will analyze practical solutions when a full assessment may not be feasible. The presenters will delve into a lawyer's view regarding early screenings, and it will review tools, and application of the AFCC Court Involved Guidelines.

Monika Logan, MA, LPC, *Frisco, TX*

Laurel Arnold Clement, JD, LPC-S, *Allen, TX*

33. Interviewing Children and Adolescents

Interviewing children and adolescents can be an anxiety provoking experience for the parenting plan evaluator. This workshop will provide specific training in the area of interviewing children and adolescents for Parenting Plan Evaluations. Specific focus will be on the use of developmentally appropriate language, the differences between a clinical interview and an interview for the purpose of PPE, and children with special needs. Strategies for providing parents a framework for the interview to decrease anxiety and specific strategies for interviewing and building rapport with children will be explored. Children with special needs that may have a neurodiverse developmental profile will also be addressed.

Amy Holsten, PhD, *Comprehensive Assessment Solutions, Augusta, GA*

34. The CCE Dialectic: How to Meet Competing Demands of the Court and the Skeptics

Join us for a workshop discussing the critical challenges facing the field of child custody evaluation. As the demand for evaluators rises, professionals face mounting critiques and reluctance to enter this specialized area of practice. This workshop will delve into the complexities of reconciling the need for more evaluators in custody evaluation practices despite professionals' reluctance. Furthermore, we will explore and offer potential solutions to address this dilemma.

Jillian Thrall, PhD, *SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA*

Danielle Sample, PhD, *SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA*

Premela Deck, JD, PhD, *SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA*

Jessica Greenwald O'Brien, PhD, *SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA*

35. Scars of a High-Conflict Divorce

A mother and her now adult son share their story of navigating a contentious divorce and the captivating journey of healing. Learn about the child's battle with anger, depression, and near-suicide during his teen years, while the panelists also offer invaluable insights for professionals on mitigating childhood trauma. Through personal narratives and practical guidance, this workshop highlights the critical role of divorce professionals in protecting children and promoting healthy parent-child relationships. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a young adult child of divorce – a perspective often unheard.

Kerry Stutzman, LMFT, MSW, *The Connected Family, Denver, CO*

Palmer Skudneski, BA, *The Connected Family, Denver, CO*

36. Family Transformation – Advocating for Trans-parents and Children in Family Court

Issues regarding transgender youth and adults have swept the country with some jurisdictions becoming "trans refuge" states while others have banned (or attempted to ban) gender affirming care. As the question becomes increasingly polarized, difficult questions present themselves in family court settings. This workshop will review the topics of transgender literacy; social science research around supporting transgender parents and children involved in child custody cases, and the fractured legal landscape around "trans refuge laws" and debates over gender-affirming care.

M. Boulette, JD, *Minneapolis, MN*

16th Symposium on Child Custody

Continuing Education Credits

A certificate of attendance is included in the registration fee. The certificate will verify attendance at conference sessions and may be used to apply for continuing education credits with registrants' accrediting institution. **Attendees are responsible for signing in and out of each session attended and certificates of attendance will reflect those sessions only.** A list of conference sessions eligible for continuing education credits will be posted on the conference portal. Attendees will receive their certificate approximately three weeks after the conference.

Psychologists: AFCC is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. AFCC maintains responsibility for this program and its content. The program is eligible for up to 18 hours of continuing education for psychologists. AFCC is also approved to sponsor continuing education for New York psychologists.

Mental Health Professionals: An application for continuing education approval from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) will be submitted for up to 18 credits; however, individuals must verify approval with their credentialing or licensing boards. LMFTs, LPCs, and other mental health professionals may use the certificate of attendance to verify attendance and apply for CE credits with their accrediting institution.

California Custody Evaluators and Mediators: Applications will be submitted to the Judicial Council of California. The views expressed in the program are those of the faculty and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the Judicial Council of California.

US Lawyers: AFCC will apply for continuing legal education in the following states: Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Vermont. AFCC reserves the right to expand the list of states to which applications will be made. Attorneys from other states may use the certificate of attendance to verify attendance and apply for CLE in their state. The California Bar Association will accept continuing education credits earned by California attorneys at a program held outside of California that has been accredited by an approved state. The New York Bar Association will accept continuing education credits earned by New York attorneys at a program that has been accredited by another state approved by New York for awarding CLE credits.

Ontario Lawyers: An application will be submitted to the Law Society of Ontario to accredit the educational program content for Continuing Professional Development, or CPD, for lawyers.

Massachusetts Parenting Coordinators: An application will be made to the state of Massachusetts for continuing education credits for parenting coordinators practicing in that state.

Save the Date for AFCC's 62nd Annual Conference in New Orleans!

AFCC 62nd Annual Conference

Bridging Perspectives:
Pioneering Solutions
in Family Law

May 28-31, 2025
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
New Orleans Marriott

16th Symposium on Child Custody

Registration Information

Please read before completing your conference registration form!

AFCC Members Save up to \$115 on Registration Rates

Register and pay by October 17th, 2024, to receive the lowest rates for the symposium! Not a member yet? Join today and take advantage of the New Membership Special.

First-Time Member Special

Join AFCC when you register for the conference and receive a twelve-month membership for \$150 – a \$10 discount – and save up to \$115 by registering at the AFCC member rate! To join, simply select the new membership special on the registration form. The new membership special rate is only available to first-time AFCC members.

Pre-Symposium Institute Registration

Includes attendance at one full-day pre-symposium institute, refreshments, and printed institute materials. Pre-symposium institute registration is a separate registration fee from the rest of the symposium.

Symposium Registration

Includes all symposium sessions, access to symposium materials, refreshment breaks, opening reception, luncheon, and a certificate of attendance. Pre-symposium institutes require a separate registration fee.

Spouse/Guest Registration

Available only to a spouse or significant other accompanying a symposium registrant, not a business associate or staff colleague. This registration includes plenary sessions, opening reception, and luncheon.

Symposium Presenter Registration

Available only to symposium presenters. Includes all symposium sessions, access to symposium materials, refreshment breaks, opening reception, luncheon, and a certificate of attendance. A separate registration fee is required for presenters who wish to attend a pre-symposium institute.

Full-Time Student Registration

Includes all symposium sessions and electronic access to symposium materials. Meal functions are not included; however, meal tickets may be purchased separately. Registration must include proof of full-time student status; attendees who register online should send a copy of their student identification card to afcc@afccnet.org. A separate registration fee is required for pre-symposium institutes.

Session or Presenter Changes

AFCC reserves the right to make changes to the conference program, including (but not limited to) changes to the content and speakers in the published event schedule, or canceling sessions, should unforeseen circumstances arise.

Conference Scholarships

AFCC will offer a limited number of conference scholarships that include registration for one pre-symposium institute, the symposium workshops, the luncheon, and a certificate of attendance. The scholarship application can be found [here](#). The scholarship application deadline is September 25, 2024. Recipients will be notified by mid-October 2024. If you have questions, please contact AFCC Communications Coordinator, Patrick Sommer, at psommer@afccnet.org or 608-664-3750.

Exhibit Forum

The Exhibit Forum will be open during conference hours and provide attendees with an opportunity to meet with representatives of AFCC partners and vendors. If you are interested in an exhibit table or other advertising opportunities, please contact AFCC Program Associate, Abby Rebholz, at arebholz@afccnet.org or 608-664-3750.

Taste of Columbus

Friday evening is your opportunity to enjoy the area with friends and colleagues. Sign up before 1:00pm on Friday to join a group of 8-12 for dinner at a local restaurant. Restaurant menus and sign-up sheets will be available onsite Friday morning. Participants are responsible for food, beverage, and transportation costs.

Meditation and Yoga

Start your day in the right frame of mind for concentration and learning! Join AFCC colleagues for morning meditation and yoga. Meditation is from 6:15am-6:30am followed by yoga from 6:30am-7:15am, Friday and Saturday mornings. Please bring a yoga mat if you have one.

Health and Safety Protocols

AFCC reserves the right to implement health and safety protocols that are consistent with CDC guidelines as may become necessary.

Audio/Video Recording

No personal audio or video recording or photographing of sessions is permitted.

Travel and Lodging Information

Hilton Columbus Downtown

402 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 384-8600

Make your reservations today! The Hilton Columbus Downtown is offering a special rate to AFCC attendees of \$194 per night for single/double occupancy. On October 30, 2024, any unreserved rooms in the AFCC block will be released and the special rate will no longer be guaranteed. **Rooms frequently sell out before the room block is released. We encourage you to make your reservation early!** Make your reservation by calling (614) 384-8600 and request the AFCC special rate or [reserve online](#). All conference attendees are responsible for making their own hotel arrangements.

Ground Transportation

Taxi fare is approximately \$40 one-way from John Glenn Columbus International Airport to the Hilton Columbus Downtown and takes about 20 minutes, depending on traffic. Uber and Lyft also offer transportation from the airport. Follow the signs at the airport to locate the appropriate ground transportation.

Parking

Valet and self-parking are available on-site. Valet is \$45 a day. Self-parking is \$38 a day.

Climate

Temperatures in Columbus during November range from the mid-60s to the low 40s. Jackets are recommended for outdoors, especially in the evenings. Meeting rooms and hotel facilities can be cool, so bring a light jacket or sweater for indoors.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

AFCC 16th Symposium on Child Custody • November 14-16, 2024

Hilton Columbus Downtown • Columbus, Ohio

Register online at afccnet.org

Please type or print clearly. This form may be duplicated.

First Name (Dr./Mr./Ms./Judge) _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____ Degree _____

First Name or Nickname (as you would like it to appear on your name badge) _____

Title/Profession _____ Organization _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration Rates	Paid by	Paid after
Please circle appropriate amount(s) below and total at the bottom	Oct 17	Oct 17

First-Time Member Special

Join AFCC for 12 months and register at AFCC member rates!
For first-time members only! _____\$150 _____\$150

Pre-Symposium Institutes Registration Rates

Full Day Institute Registration – AFCC Member _____\$160 _____\$180
Full Day Institute Registration – Non-member _____\$195 _____\$225

Symposium Registration Rates

Symposium Registration – AFCC Member _____\$385 _____\$415
Symposium Registration – Non-member _____\$465 _____\$505
Symposium Presenter Rate – AFCC Member _____\$275 _____\$295
Symposium Presenter Rate – Non-member _____\$320 _____\$350
Full-time Student Rate – AFCC Member
(ID required. No meals included.) _____\$145 _____\$170
Full-time Student Rate – Non-member
(ID required. No meals included.) _____\$170 _____\$195

All registrations include a certificate of attendance.

TOTAL \$ _____ \$ _____

Method of Payment

Registration must be paid in full prior to attendance.

_____ Payment of \$ _____ is enclosed (US currency only please.)

_____ Please charge \$ _____ to my: Visa MasterCard
 Discover American Express

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____/_____/_____ Security Code _____ Billing ZIP/postal code _____

Name on Credit Card _____

Card Holder's Signature _____

Institute Selections - Thursday, November 14, 2024

If you have registered for an institute, please check only one of the following boxes:

Pre-Symposium Institutes

- 1. Advanced Parenting Plan Evaluations
- 2. Advance Orientation Improves Ecological Validity in PPEs
- 3. Advanced Issues in Mediation
- 4. No Professional is an Island: How to Effectively (or Successfully) Coordinate Multiple Roles in Family Court Proceedings

Symposium Workshop Selections

Seating is not guaranteed and will be first-come, first-served.

Your selections will ensure that sessions with more attendees are scheduled in larger meeting rooms. (Please write in one workshop number per time slot)

Thursday, November 14	5:15pm – 6:45pm	Opening Session	__Yes __No
Thursday, November 14	6:45pm – 7:45pm	Welcome Reception	__Yes __No
Friday, November 15	8:30am – 10:00am	Plenary Session	__Yes __No
Friday, November 15	10:30am – 12:00pm	Workshops 1–6	_____
Friday, November 15	12:00pm – 1:30pm	AFCC Luncheon	__Yes __No
Friday, November 15	1:45pm – 3:15pm	Workshops 7–12	_____
Friday, November 15	3:30pm – 5:00pm	Workshops 13–18	_____
Saturday, November 16	8:30am – 10:00am	Workshops 19–24	_____
Saturday, November 16	10:30am – 2:00pm	Workshops 25–30	_____
Saturday, November 16	1:30pm – 3:00pm	Workshops 31–36	_____

You may register online at afccnet.org
or return the completed form and payment to:
AFCC • 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719
Phone: 608-664-3750 • Fax: 608-664-3751
afcc@afccnet.org

Cancellation Policy: Transfer of registration to another person may be done once, at any time, without a fee. All requests for refunds must be made in writing. Written notice of cancellation received by fax, emailed and confirmed by an email from AFCC, or postmarked by October 18, 2024, will be issued a full refund minus a \$75 service fee. Written notice received by fax, emailed and confirmed by an email from AFCC, or postmarked by November 1, 2024, will have the \$75 service fee deducted and the balance issued as a credit for future AFCC conferences, webinars, trainings or membership dues. No refunds or credits will be issued for cancellations received after November 1, 2024.