



February 2022
VOL. 17 No. 2

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AFCC 59th Annual Conference

Register Now! Early-Bird Rates End on March 2nd!

The Use, Misuse, and Abuse of Technology in Family Law: Practical, Ethical, Safety, and Procedural Challenges

May 11-14, 2022

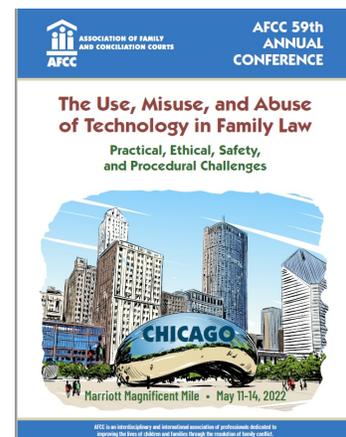
Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile

Register now for the AFCC 59th Annual Conference for the best rates! Choose the best method of registration for you:

- **Register online**
- **Email your registration form to afcc@afccnet.org**
- **Call the AFCC office** to complete your registration over the phone (608-664-3750)
- **Mail your registration form and payment** to 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719
- **Fax your registration form** to 608-664-3751

AFCC is waiving all cancellation fees for the conference due to any health and safety-related issues.* We hope this makes your decision to register for the conference easier in these uncertain times.

AFCC 59th Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois
May 11-14, 2022



Thank you to our annual conference sponsors!

Diamond Sponsors



Register Now!

*Simply provide notice in writing to AFCC at afcc@afccnet.org by Monday, May 9, 2022.

Add a Pre-Conference Institute to Make the Most of Your Conference Experience!

Join us on May 11th for a full-day institute focused on a single topic. Choose one of the following to add to your registration!

1. The Intersection of Family Law and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR Track)

Clare Fowler, EdD; Susan Guthrie, JD; and Colin Rule, MPP

2. Advanced Training in Child Custody Evaluations

Kim Bonuomo, JD; Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP; David A. Martindale, PhD, ABPP; Arnold T. Shienvold, PhD; and Sol Rappaport, PhD, ABPP

3. Judicial Officers Institute: Values, Beliefs, Cultural Norms, and Parenting Time

Daniel Bloom, JD; Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman; and April Harris-Britt, PhD

Moderator: Hon. Grace G. Dickler

4. Children's Mental Health, Educational, and Social/Emotional Development

Jamie Pellar, LCSW; Hollie Sobel, PhD; and Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP

5. Intimate Partner Violence: Screening, Process Choice, and Effective Parenting Plans

Magistrate Richard Altman; Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM; Corinne (Cookie) Levitz, JD; and Stephanie Senuta, MS

6. Pivoting Parenting Coordination to the Virtual World

Annette T. Burns, JD; Shely Polak, PhD; Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD; and Nancy Chausow-Shafer, JD

Read the [full conference program brochure](#) for full descriptions of the pre-conference institutes.

Reserve Your Hotel Room Now!

Make your hotel reservation today for the best availability. The Marriott Chicago Downtown Magnificent Mile is offering a special rate to AFCC attendees of \$229 per night for single/double occupancy. **We encourage you to make your reservation early because rooms frequently sell out before the room block is released.** Reserve online or call 1-877-303-0104 and request the AFCC special rate.

Donate to the Silent Auction

Conference attendees have long enjoyed the annual AFCC Silent Auction, and we are excited to mark its return in Chicago this year. Proceeds help fund AFCC projects and initiatives. The auction will take place on Friday, May 13, 2022, 5:30pm-



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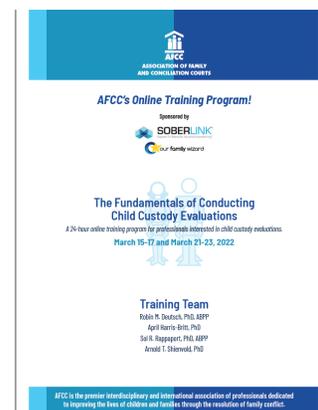
ADR Notable

Mediation Management Made Easy.



Online Parenting Programs

AFCC Online Training Programs



The Fundamentals of Conducting Child Custody Evaluations
Mar. 15-17, 2022, and
Mar. 21-23, 2022

7:30pm. You do not need to attend the conference to donate.

Popular auction items have included tropical getaways, unique artisan jewelry, sports memorabilia, electronics, and books. The best options are small, portable items that are easy for the donor to bring, and easy for the recipient to take home.

Complete the online form to donate an item.

Exhibit with AFCC!

Sign up now to exhibit at the AFCC 59th Annual Conference! Now is the time to sign up because 1) the lowest prices are available through March 11th, 2) the best table placement is available on a first-come, first-served basis, and 3) space is filling up fast!

Don't miss out on your chance to promote your business to AFCC conference attendees. Read the prospectus and contact [Gina Wentling](#) to sign up.

AFCC's New Look!

The next time you visit [the AFCC website](#), you will notice a new, updated look!

The website still contains all the information you need to engage with AFCC, including conference information, webinar details, chapter information, professional resources, and the member center, including the Webinar Archives and Family Court Review.

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the new landscape. We have made just a few changes to the navigation, which should make it easier to find the information you need. **Webinars**, for instance, can now be found on their own tab.

We hope you enjoy the new look and streamlined navigation of the updated AFCC website! If you need help finding something, email afcc@afccnet.org or call 608-664-3750.

Conversation Corner: Amy Schmitz A Column Throwback to the AFCC Newsletter of the 90's

Amy J. Schmitz is a professor and Chair in Law at The Ohio State Moritz College of Law and Program on Dispute Resolution. She previously taught at the University of Missouri School of Law and Center for Dispute Resolution, and at the University of Colorado School of Law. Professor Schmitz is affiliated with The Ohio State Program on Data Governance and Divided Community Project. She hosts

The Arbitration Conversation, a video series featuring short conversations with important voices in arbitration. She is the keynote speaker at the Opening Session of the AFCC 59th



15th Symposium on Child Custody

ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS
AFCC

AFCC 15TH SYMPOSIUM ON CHILD CUSTODY
From a Full House to Parenting Apart
in Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA

LAS VEGAS
November 10-12, 2022
Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

When a full house becomes parenting apart, change in the family can become all consuming. While most families can successfully navigate these changes, some struggle due to a variety of issues, including substance misuse, parental alienating behaviors, intense partner violence, and other challenges. How can family justice professionals help when children are shuttled from a successful home to the care of high-conflict families? Join AFCC in Las Vegas as we examine the challenges of parenting apart.

AFCC is accepting proposals for 90-minute workshops. All proposals must be submitted using the online form by April 25, 2022. See reverse side for submission instructions. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Child dispute resolution
- Planning coordination
- Psychometric testing
- Advanced Childhood Experiences
- Culture and parenting time
- Services for self-represented parties
- Interventions for visit or return cases
- Building neutrality
- Court-involved therapy
- Cost-effective evaluators
- Effective child-involvement techniques
- Mediation for unrepresented parents
- Conducting virtual evaluations
- Hybrid dispute resolution processes
- Voice of the child in high-conflict cases
- Prevention programs for divorcing parents

Call for Proposals
Submissions are due
April 25, 2022.

AFCC Chapter Conferences

Colorado Chapter Annual Conference
Postponed to Fall 2022
Stay tuned for details!

California Chapter Annual Conference
Feb. 25, 26, 27, 2022
Presented as live Zoom Webinars

Alberta Chapter Annual Conference
March 4, 2022
Calgary, Alberta and online

Missouri Chapter Spring Conference
March 4, 2022 and
March 11, 2022
Being held virtually

Massachusetts Chapter Webinar Series
March 8, 2022
Being held virtually

Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference
March 18, 2022
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

AFCC: The use of technology and algorithms in family law practice has increased significantly in the last few years. What are some of the factors that have contributed to the recent surge in integration of technology with family law professional practice and family courts? [Read more.](#)

Correction: Conversation Corner: Tami Moscoe

Last month, we published a conversation with Tami Moscoe. Please review this revised version of the article. The previous version stated that *articling students* were involved in the project; in fact, *law students* volunteer in The Family Law Limited Scope Services Project. [Read the updated article.](#)

AFCC's Online Training Course on Child Custody Evaluations Begins March 15th!

The Fundamentals of Conducting Child Custody Evaluations

March 15-17, 2022, and March 21-23, 2022

This 24-hour online training program is designed for professionals interested in child custody evaluations (CCE). The program offers participants the opportunity to learn from a team of leading practitioners and trainers.

The program will take place in two segments per day, two hours each. Topics include the CCE process, psychological testing, parenting plans, research, and cultural and diversity considerations.

Join us and earn up to 24 hours of continuing education training! Recordings of all sessions and all handouts will be available to registrants.

Visit the training portal for more information! On the portal, you can:

- [View the full schedule](#) to plan your attendance.
- [Meet the training team.](#)
- [Read the learning objectives.](#)
- [Consult the brochure](#) for full details.
- [Learn about the training program sponsors.](#)

We hope you can join us for this practical, comprehensive training program!

[Register now!](#)

Ready to Learn Even More About Child Custody Evaluations?

An in-person, interactive program will be offered as a supplement as a pre-conference institute at the 59th Annual Conference in Chicago.

Look for **2. *Advanced Training in Child Custody Evaluation*** on page 4 of the [conference program brochure](#). This institute is designed for those who have attended the child custody evaluation online training program or similar training.

Parent Education in the Wake of the Pandemic: A Pilot Project

Joi Hollis, PhD

The Family Center of the Conciliation Court (FCCC) of the Arizona Superior Court was established in 1963 by Arizona Law and is under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Superior

Court in Pima County (Tucson). The professional staff members of the FCCC have advanced degrees in the behavioral sciences and post-graduate experience in marriage and family therapy, mediation, and court-ordered evaluations. Conciliation services provided in Pima County, and to varying degree, other jurisdictions throughout Arizona include family (divorce) mediation, mandatory parent education, legal decision-making (custody) and/or parenting time evaluations, court ordered child interviews, parenting coordination, and conciliation counseling. [Read more.](#)

Submit Your Proposals for the AFCC 15th Symposium on Child Custody!

When a full house becomes parenting apart, changes in the family can become all consuming. While most families can successfully navigate these changes, some struggle due to a variety of issues. How can family justice professionals help when children are dealt a bad hand? Is a successful future in the cards for high-conflict families? Join AFCC in Las Vegas as we examine the challenges of parenting apart.

AFCC 15th Symposium on Child Custody

From a Full House to Parenting Apart

November 10-12, 2022

Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino

AFCC is accepting proposals for 90-minute workshops to be presented at the symposium. Please read the [Call for Proposals](#) for full details and submit your proposal using the [online form](#). The deadline to submit is **April 25, 2022**.

AFCC Will Present Awards on May 11, 2022. Nominate a Colleague Today!

AFCC awards acknowledge the many important contributions made by individuals and organizations to enhance the lives of children and families involved in family courts. Your nominations help recognize these accomplishments.

Nominations for the following awards, to be presented at the AFCC 59th Annual Conference in Chicago, will be accepted online through **March 21, 2022**.



John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award recognizes outstanding contributions and/or achievements by AFCC members. [Submit a nomination!](#)

Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award, sponsored by the Oregon Family Institute, recognizes outstanding research and/or research achievements in the field of family and divorce. [Submit a nomination!](#)

Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award recognizes innovation in court-connected or court-related programs created by AFCC members. [Submit a nomination!](#)

AFCC Webinar Corner

Moving Family Disputes Online

Bernie Mayer, PhD and Colin Rule

March 10, 2022 | 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Registration closes on March 9, 2022, at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada.

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) is growing quickly in family dispute resolution and family

courts, primarily as a result of the pandemic. But what are the ramifications of moving family disputes online?

Presenters in this webinar will discuss some of the opportunities and challenges in resolving family disputes online, including: How do online processes change the dynamics in a dispute? Can online resolutions truly address the psychological needs of the parties? And what are some of the ethical dilemmas that emerge from online practice?

Bernie Mayer, PhD, has provided conflict intervention for families, communities, NGO's, unions, corporations, and governmental agencies throughout North America and internationally for over 40 years. He is Professor Emeritus of Conflict Studies, Program on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, Creighton University, and a founding partner of CDR Associates. Bernie's newest book (with Jacqueline Font-Guzmán), *The Neutrality Trap: from Constructive Engagement to Strategic Disruption in Social Conflict*, was published in early 2022. Previous books include *The Dynamics of Conflict*, *Beyond Neutrality*, *Staying with Conflict*, and *The Conflict Paradox*.



Colin Rule is CEO of Mediate.com. In 2011 Colin co-founded Modria.com, an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) provider based in Silicon Valley, which was acquired by Tyler Technologies in 2017. From 2017 to 2020 Colin served as Vice President of ODR at Tyler. From 2003 to 2011 Colin was Director of ODR for eBay and PayPal. Colin is the author of *Online Dispute Resolution for Business* and co-author of *The New Handshake: ODR and the Future of Consumer Protection*. He co-founded Online Resolution, in 1999 and served as its CEO and President. Colin also worked with the National Institute for Dispute Resolution in Washington, DC and the Consensus Building Institute in Cambridge, MA.



Registration

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$50

Certificate of Attendance

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$20

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

[Register today!](#)

DE&I Clients and "-Isms": Recognizing and Addressing Discriminatory Behavior

Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP; Kelly Browe Olson, JD; Jacqueline Font-Guzmán, PhD; and Hon. Linda Fidnick

April 7, 2022 | 4:00-6:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada

Registration closes on April 6, 2022 at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada.

[Register now!](#)

*This program will include one hour of panel discussion, followed by one hour of discussion by all participants. The program is free to attend and includes a certificate of attendance, but **you must register.***

What Do Judges Want?

Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman and Hon. Herman Walker, Jr.
April 12, 2022 | 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US/Canada
Registration closes on April 11, 2022, at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada.
[Register now!](#)

Chapter News

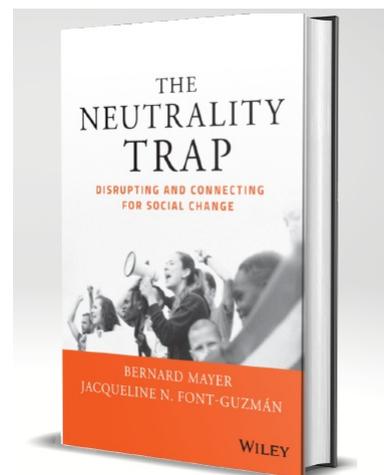
Kerry Smith, PhD, AFCC member from Chicago, Illinois, is the new president of the Illinois chapter of AFCC. She has a PhD in Clinical psychology, and she works in the areas of child and family therapy, as a divorce coach and child specialist in collaborative law, and in the court system providing evaluations for individuals and families.

AFCC-Illinois is focusing on education through its Lunch and Learn series and Annual Conference (October 13, 2022), increasing resources for members via its website, and by offering networking opportunities across disciplines. Congratulations, Kerry!



Member News

Bernard Mayer, PhD, AFCC member from Kingston, Ontario and co-presenter of AFCC's webinar on March 10th, is a co-author of a new book, *The Neutrality Trap: Disrupting and Connecting for Social Change*, with Jacqueline N. Font-Guzmán, who will be a co-presenter of the AFCC DE&I program on April 7th. *The Neutrality Trap* challenges all of us to embrace the potential we have to further social progress while cautioning us against reflexively calling for dialogue without also recognizing the necessity for disrupting regressive systems and building social movements. The authors invite us to reconsider our reliance on neutrality, objectivity, and professionalism and instead commit ourselves to justice, equality, and genuine connection. [Learn more.](#)



Do you have a notable achievement to share? Email [Gina Wentling](#) 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!

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.

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February 2022
VOL. 27 No. 2

Conversation Corner: Amy Schmitz, JD

A Column Throwback to the eNEWS of the 90's

Amy J. Schmitz is a professor and Chair in Law at The Ohio State Moritz College of Law and Program on Dispute Resolution. She previously taught at the University of Missouri School of Law and Center for Dispute Resolution, and at the University of Colorado School of Law. Professor Schmitz is affiliated with The Ohio State Program on Data Governance and Divided Community Project. She hosts [The Arbitration Conversation](#), a video series featuring short conversations with important voices in arbitration. She is the keynote speaker at the Opening Session of the AFCC 59th Annual Conference, May 11-14, 2022, in Chicago, Illinois.



AFCC: The use of technology and algorithms in family law practice has increased significantly in the last few years. What are some of the factors that have contributed to the recent surge in integration of technology with family law professional practice and family courts?

AS: So many thought that technology would never creep into mediation, for example, because these have been traditionally in-person practices. The pandemic nonetheless accelerated the online movement. Still, some platforms were not built for online interactions, yet had to be adapted to accommodate for the inability to meet in-person. To a degree, there was no choice, so reliance on technology, especially for connection, communication, and information gathering, became a necessity. A lot of money has been invested in Legaltech and artificial intelligence (AI) over the last five or so years, so opportunity has also been ripe.

AFCC: Are there clear benefits stemming from the use of technology in family court matters?

AS: Absolutely! Technology can benefit individuals in the process and, especially in certain areas, expands access to justice. In other words, it is a bridge that allows some to participate in the process more fully where they might not have been able to due to physical limitations or

geographic obstacles. Also, artificial intelligence may augment access to justice where it helps self-represented litigants in gathering information and learning about their rights. Think in terms of a busy litigant or judge and the possibility of having a program that helps individuals learn about “this is what you ought to do.” There are dangers. However, when we consider some of the dangers of relying too much on technology and artificial technology for family law outcomes, the pushback is that data review through a system could be less biased than a judge, who will always bring their human experiences, knowledge, and views (and biases in some cases) into an evaluation of facts.

AFCC: You mention the *dangers* of relying too much on technology in family law. What are some of these dangers, and why do we need to be mindful of them as the roles of technology and artificial intelligence continue to evolve?

AS: Algorithms have been used with the calculation of child support, for example, for a long time. When it comes to mental health evaluation or parenting time, though, there must be a concern about replacing a person making the actual recommendation or decision. It can be kind of cool to think about answers at our fingertips, but think about what the human element brings to the process. Lawyering involves problem-solving skills, interviewing skills, empathy—the knowledge of a case that comes from interacting with the client and with the other professionals involved in that case. It can be detrimental to long-term mental health to rely solely on a machine for outcomes or interpretation of best interest. Data is collected, but accuracy of outcome will depend on the accuracy of the data and the system will not likely catch what a trained professional will. Furthermore, actuarial science is not new, but once we transition to machine learning and there is no longer a person, the data starts teaching itself and goes beyond single data analytics. We talk about how the cookie cutter approach doesn’t work in family court – but without the human factor, that is what artificial intelligence can produce.

AFCC: That is a really important point. With all the benefits and the fact that technology helped to keep family court processes going during the pandemic, we need to be mindful of some potential challenges. Where do we go from here with the use of technology and artificial intelligence in family law?

AS: Technology isn’t going away. It *is* happening and it *is* here. It is also fast-moving, so one of the most important tasks ahead of us is the development of best practices. As a co-chair of the ODR Task Force through the American Bar Association in concert with the National Center for Technology and Dispute Resolution and the International Council on ODR, I am honored to be able to participate in the process, and we are hoping to develop best practices and create some guardrails for integrating technology and artificial intelligence with the work that happens dispute resolution, including that impacting family law. We need to be thinking about what data is based upon—and, more importantly, what data might be missing from predictions generated through technology. So much happens with confidentiality, through observation, and interpersonal interaction that just isn’t going to be a part of an algorithm or training dataset for application of AI. There must be a balance.

AFCC: We are looking forward to you sharing your thoughts on these topics in greater depth during your keynote at the annual conference in Chicago!

AS: There is a lot to ponder as we continue to consider what lies ahead. I am sure it will be a lively discussion with the panelists, and I also look forward to the opportunity to explore the relationship between technology, artificial intelligence, and trained professionals in family law process.



Parent Education in the Wake of the Pandemic: A Pilot Project

Joi Hollis, PhD

The Family Center of the Conciliation Court (FCCC) of the Arizona Superior Court was established in 1963 by Arizona Law and is under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Superior Court in Pima County (Tucson). The professional staff members of the FCCC have advanced degrees in the behavioral sciences and post-graduate experience in marriage and family therapy, mediation, and court-ordered evaluations. Conciliation services provided in Pima County, and to varying degree, other jurisdictions throughout Arizona include family (divorce) mediation, mandatory parent education, legal decision-making (custody) and/or parenting time evaluations, court ordered child interviews, parenting coordination, and conciliation counseling.

FCCC began providing the state mandated Domestic Relations Education on Children's Issues Course, known more commonly as the Parent Education Program, in house as of July 2007. Two curricula were developed to address the distinct needs of divorcing parents as well as the special needs of never-married parents. A third, Spanish-language curriculum was also developed for divorcing and never-married parents. The divorce curriculum imparts vital information to parents about the impact divorce and separation has on children, and the never-married curriculum addresses paternity issues and the importance of parental involvement. Both curricula provide information on the impact that parental conflict has on children as well as ways to work cooperatively with each other. Parents are also given information on how to navigate through the court system and available resources in the community. The course is required for all parents going through a legal separation, divorce, or paternity action who have minor children. Pre-COVID-19 pandemic, Parent Education classes were delivered in both English and Spanish by FCCC staff during the week, some evenings, and on weekends. More than 3,700 parents annually participated in these in-person classes.

A Necessary Transition

In March 2020, mandatory parent education classes offered by the FCCC were suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic. This disruption gridlocked Family Law calendars because, pursuant to Arizona statute, parties involved in domestic relations cases are required to complete parent education training before legal processes can advance.

Course delivery was re-instated in July 2020 using Microsoft Teams. However, considering the ongoing pandemic, the Court's vision was to convert the mandatory parent education course from an in-person to an online, on-demand format, which would enhance access and convenience to parents in the long-term, post-pandemic. The Court also anticipated cost savings, gaining efficiencies, and building internal capacity (e.g., to convert other curricula to virtual, self-paced formats) as a result of this project.

The Pilot

In November 2020, FCCC was awarded a Pandemic Response and Recovery grant from the State Justice Institute (SJI) to facilitate the conversion to an on-demand, online, and self-paced e-Learning program. Grant funds were used to design, launch, and evaluate the e-Learning program and the process used to convert the course from an in-person format to an on-demand, virtual platform.

One hundred and sixty-nine parents (n=169) enrolled in the on-demand course between August 12 – October 14, 2021. They comprised the pilot population; their responses to the end-of-course evaluation were used in the overall evaluation.

Experience of Parents

Parents who opted into the pilot and completed the e-Learning course overwhelmingly rated their experiences positively in terms of relevance, convenience, efficiency, and easiness to navigate and understand.

All parents who completed the on-demand E-Learning parenting class were required to complete the course evaluation before receiving a Certificate of Completion. The course evaluation was built into the online program and parents were automatically directed to the evaluation questions upon successfully passing the end-of-course quiz (with 80% accuracy).

When FCCC Director shared progress and demonstrated the e-Learning course to Arizona Administrative Office of the Court (AOC) staff, judicial officers, court administrators and Conciliation Court directors across Arizona, the presentations generated considerable interest in this project, with many other Arizona Courts expressing an interest in making it available to their court users. The Court is now working with the AOC as it plans to expand the e-Learning program to counties across Arizona and invest in developing a Spanish-speaking version.

As of January 2022, with the pilot now complete, the online version of the parent education program remains in high demand and now has over 900 registrants since its inception in August 2021.

Joi Hollis is the Division Director of the Family Center of the Conciliation Court in Tucson, AZ. She has worked at the Conciliation Court since 2001. Joi has a Ph.D. in Education Psychology from Walden University, in addition to a master's degree in Education with an emphasis in Counseling and Guidance from Boston University. Dr. Hollis is a limited term Adjunct Professor with the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law, teaching Family Mediation.



She has over 25 years of combined experience working with children, adolescents, and adults in private mental health and family court settings. In 2019, Dr. Hollis was appointed to both the Arizona Supreme Court's Committee on the Impact of Domestic Violence and the Courts and the Family Court Improvement Committee. She is a past member of the Arizona Supreme Court-Commission on Minorities in the Judiciary, serving for six years.

Dr. Hollis is a longtime member of AFCC and the Arizona Chapter of AFCC (AZ-AFCC). In 2021, she was appointed as the Chapter Council Liaison of the AFCC Board. She also serves on the Board of AZ-AFCC. A military spouse and veteran for over 25 years (TSGT Timothy Hollis, Ret.-Deceased), Joi is the proud mother of two adult children.