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## 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

The early-bird discount is ending soon! [Register now](#) for the best rates!

[Register Now](#)

### Earn Up to 18 Hours of Continuing Education Credit!

Psychologists, mental health professionals, lawyers, mediators, counselors, social workers, parenting coordinators, and other family law professionals have the opportunity to earn up to 18 hours of credit by attending the symposium and a pre-symposium institute. See the [conference portal](#) for additional information.

### Pre-Symposium Institutes

This conference will offer four full-day institutes that will allow attendees to do a deep-dive into one of the topics below:

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](#)

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

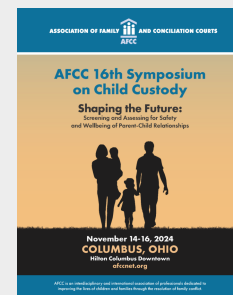
September 2024  
Vol 19 No. 9

## AFCC Conferences

### AFCC 16th Symposium on Child Custody

November 14-16, 2024

Columbus, OH



Conference Sponsor  
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[Navajo Jewelry & Crafts, LLC](#)  
[AFCC Ohio Chapter](#)

### AFCC 62nd Annual Conference

May 28-31, 2025  
New Orleans, LA

## AFCC Online Training Programs

### The Fundamentals of Parenting Coordination

December 2-5, 2024

### Save the Date:

[Parent Child Contact Problems](#)  
January 13-16, 2025

[The Fundamentals of](#)

## Unintended Consequences

- Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA
- Hon. Denise McColley (Ret.)
- April Harris-Britt, PhD
- Alexander D. Jones, JD, MSW
- Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM

### Exhibit at the Symposium

Have an exciting product or service that family law professionals could benefit from? With over 400 family law professionals expected to attend, this conference is the perfect place to display your service or product! [Sign up now](#) to exhibit at the symposium.

Register Now!

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## Conversation Corner

A Column Throwback to the AFCC Newsletter of the 90's

Amy Armstrong, LISW



**AFCC:** *You certainly have your hand in a lot of intervention projects – but it seems clear that they are all focused on conflict resolution. Which conflict resolution strategies do you find most effective?*

**Amy Armstrong:** Conflict resolution is about suspending our conclusions long enough to get creative. We remember that what we think we know can be very limiting – and as soon as we are willing to try on new ideas, we delight in much more acceptance and much less persuasion. What I mean by that is curiosity takes over and creates a much safer space to explore options.

**AFCC:** *Coaching has also become a big part of your practice. What is coaching in the context of family court work? What led you to coaching as a primary identity? What do you find most rewarding about the work?*

**AA:** Yes, coaching is the core of everything I do! In family court coaching allows the professionals to remain neutral and invite the clients to take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings and actions. With coaching the work is a treasure hunt. It is always exciting to see what the clients decide is the right next step for them to consider as they move forward.

Continue Reading

## Conducting Parenting Plan Evaluations

March 10-13 and  
March 17-19, 2025

## AFCC Chapter Conferences

### AFCC Utah Fall Conference

October 10-11, 2024  
Salt Lake City, UT

### AFCC Colorado Chapter Fall Conference

October 18-20, 2024  
Breckenridge, CO

### AFCC Maryland Annual Conference

October 23, 2024  
Annapolis, MD

### AFCC Texas Annual Conference

October 24-25, 2024  
Austin, TX

### AFCC Ontario Annual Conference

October 24-25, 2024  
Toronto, ON

### AFCC Indiana Annual Conference

October 25, 2024  
Indianapolis, IN

### AFCC Missouri Fall Conference

October 25, 2024  
Virtual

### AFCC Illinois Annual Conference

November 7, 2024  
Chicago, IL

### AFCC New York Annual Conference

December 13, 2024  
New York, NY

### AFCC Arizona Annual Conference

January 24-26, 2025  
Sedona, AZ

### AFCC California Annual Conference

February 7-9, 2025  
Costa Mesa, CA

# AFCC 62nd Annual Conference

**Deadline Approaching - October 4th!**

*Bridging Perspectives: Pioneering Solutions in Family Law*

May 28-31, 2025 | New Orleans, LA

Our work as family law professionals involves collaboration and differing perspectives across practices, sometimes harmoniously and other times with tension. AFCC stands at the forefront of innovative solutions to complex family issues. Join us in New Orleans as we convene the world's leading experts to build bridges that span the gaps between professional approaches and priorities. Participate in the pursuit of enduring solutions that address both age-old and emerging dilemmas in family law.



## Call for Proposals

Present your unique perspective with a 90-minute workshop proposals. Please see the [Call for Proposals](#) for complete instructions and reach out to AFCC's Operation Administrator, [Kelly Bienfang](#), with any questions regarding your proposal. **All proposals must be submitted using the online form prior to October 4th, 2024!**

[Submit a Proposal](#)

## Webinar Corner

### Understanding Conflicted Family Systems Through a Developmental Lens: How Do I Get Refueled?

Benjamin Garber, PhD

**October 9, 2024**

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

**Registration will close on October 8, 2024, at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada .**

This is NOT a basic introduction to attachment theory or a repetition of the [September 2021 AFCC webinar on attachment theory in court](#). This is, instead, a brief conceptual overview of human development from conception toward autonomy with pitstops along the way to understand the back-and-forth dance of separation/individuation and enmeshment. In this view, healthy parents function as gas stations and children are cars that become more and more fuel efficient as they grow. The emotional upheaval that can be associated with family conflict, separation, and divorce can disrupt a child's sense of when and where and how s/he will be refueled, setting the stage for many of the maladaptive dynamics so familiar to family law including enmeshment. Family law professionals must have a foundation in these concepts in order to understand the family system as it has developed over time into the present and as it is likely to develop into the future.

**Benjamin Garber, PhD**, is a New Hampshire licensed psychologist, parenting coordinator, former guardian ad litem, and expert consultant to family law matters across the United States and Canada. Dr. Garber is a prolific writer and acclaimed speaker. He is the author of eight books concerned with better understanding and serving the needs of children, more than two dozen juried professional publications concerned with high conflict family dynamics, and hundreds of popular press articles. He is proud to announce two new books available this fall: "Mending Fences," (Unhooked Media) a cognitive-behavioral approach to reunification therapy, and "Dynamics, not Diagnoses" (with Dana Prescott and Chris Mulchay; American Bar Association) the field guide to high conflict family dynamics.



## Registration

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$50

## Certificate of Attendance

Members: \$15

Non-members: \$20



[Register Now!](#)

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## Affirming & Supporting LGBTQIA+ Youth & Families: From the Basics to Advanced Family Court Concerns, Part II (DE&I Series)

Lindsey Sank Davis, PhD, McKenzie Sheridan, MA, and Jesse Frieder, MEd

**October 23, 2024**

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

**Registration will close on October 22, at 9:00am Eastern Time US/Canada.**

The second part of AFCC's DE&I webinar is coming up! While the first part focused on recommendations for creating an LGBTQIA+-affirming clinical or legal practice. If you missed the first part, you can find the recording [here](#). The second part will include recommendations for family court practitioners, with a focus on parenting plan evaluators. It will discuss legal issues that affect LGBTQIA+ children, youth, and families. The presenters will review recent developments in LGBTQIA+ family law, including legislation affecting transgender youth.

**AFCC's DE&I webinars are free to attend, but you need to register in advance to receive the link to join the webinar.**

[Register Now!](#)

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## More Upcoming Webinars!

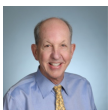
See below for a comprehensive list of upcoming webinars:



### Ethical Decision-making in the Face of Competing Guidelines

Arnold Shienvold, PhD

November 20, 2024



### Cutting to the Chase Competently: Brief Focused Custody Assessment

Ken Perlmutter, PhD & Christy Bradshaw Schmidt, MA, LPC

December 12, 2024



*AFCC's monthly webinars are eligible for one-hour of continuing education credits for qualifying professionals.*

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## AFCC Online Training Programs

### The Fundamentals of Parenting Coordination

December 2-5, 2024

Interested in parenting coordination? Join AFCC in December for a program that will provide a comprehensive overview of the parenting coordination process, including definition of the role, responsibilities, and function of the parenting coordinator; an overview of family dynamics; specific PC strategies, techniques, and interventions; implications of intimate partner violence; cultural considerations; ethical issues; and use of technology.

Participants will learn about the parenting coordinator's scope of authority, strategies to help parents improve cooperation and communication, how to help clients utilize the process, and how to effectively write recommendations or decisions.

#### Training Team:

- Debra K. Carter, PhD
- Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP
- Shely Polak, PhD, AccFM
- Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD

[Register Now!](#)

## Save the Date for Our Upcoming Trainings!

### **New this year!** Parent Child Contact Problems

January 13-16, 2025

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

March 10-13 and March 17-19, 2025

Save the date for these online training programs! More information and registration will be posted to our [online training page](#).

## AFCC Staff News

### **Welcome Back, Erin: Our New Process and Strategy Analyst!**

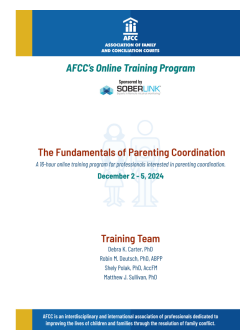


We are thrilled to welcome Erin Way (formerly Erin Sommerfeld) back to the AFCC staff as a Process and Strategy Analyst! Erin was with AFCC from 2006 to 2016, where she held various roles in communications and marketing. Erin's background in modern marketing technology stacks combined with her formal study of information systems (MLIS, MBA) and her experience at AFCC make her well suited to help us modernize operations in support of more effective data management, member engagement, and program services.

## AFCC Chapter News

### **AFCC Ontario**

Dan Ashbourne is this year's Dena Moyal Award recipient. The Dena Moyal Distinguished Service Award is an annual award that honors an AFCC-Ontario member for their exemplary contributions to the Ontario Chapter.



As a psychologist and accredited mediator, Dan has led efforts to advance mental health services and trauma-informed approaches for families in the legal system. As the Executive Director Emeritus of London Family Court Clinic (LFCC), he has mentored many family justice professionals. Though retired in 2022, Dan continues his work through Navigating Onward, training on Voice of the Child Reports, and serving on the board of the Ontario Association for Family Mediation.

Congratulations, Dan!

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## AFCC Member News



AFCC members, **Annette Burns** and **Nicole Siqueiros-Stoutner**, have published a new book coming out this November titled, **CO-PARENTING BY DESIGN: The Definitive Guide for Divorced or Separated Parents**. This guide helps divorced or separated parents create a parenting plan that minimizes conflict over schedules, holidays, medical decisions, and education by providing sample language to craft effective parenting plans. Congratulations, Annette and Nicole.

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**Do you have any news you'd like to share?** Contact AFCC's Communication Coordinator, [Patrick Sommer](#).

### 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](#).

*AFCC members are free to share eNEWS content.*

#### EDITOR:

[Ann Ordway, JD, PhD](#)

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

[Patrick Sommer, BS](#)

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## **Conversation Corner: Amy Armstrong, LISW**

September 2024

A Column Throwback to the AFCC Newsletter of the 90's

Vol 19 No. 9



**Amy Armstrong, LISW** is a pioneer in bringing innovative conflict resolution practices to the arena of family law and beyond. As Co-founder of The Center for Family Resolution (CFR) in Columbus, Ohio, Amy has established a hub for specialized trauma-informed interventions for court-involved families. In 2020, Amy joined the Delaware, Ohio court as a family resource coordinator, bringing co-parent coaching to the forefront of dispute resolution. Collaborating with co-authors, Amy authored "Real-Time Parenting: Choose Your Action Steps for the Present Moment," a work that earned three notable literary awards. Her new book, *Mastering Boundaries: Claim Your Power to Resolve Conflict*, is due out soon. Amy serves as the Director of Education at The Center for Coach Development, preparing professionals to earn credentials with the International Coaching Federation and excel in their chosen fields. She is a former president of the AFCC Ohio Chapter.

**AFCC:** *You certainly have your hand in a lot of intervention projects – but it seems clear that they are all focused on conflict resolution. Which conflict resolution strategies do you find most effective?*

**AA:** Conflict resolution is about suspending our conclusions long enough to get creative. We remember that what we think we know can be very limiting – and as soon as we are willing to try on new ideas, we delight in much more acceptance and much less persuasion. What I mean by that is curiosity takes over and creates a much safer space to explore options.

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**AA:** Yes, coaching is the core of everything I do! In family court coaching allows the professionals to remain neutral and invite the clients to take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings and actions. With coaching the work is a treasure hunt. It is always exciting to see what the clients decide is the right next step for them to consider as they move forward.

**AFCC:** *How has working within the court system influenced your own approach to helping parents reach a resolution, especially with parenting plans and time-sharing with children?*

**AA:** The court system can be daunting. We often meet people at their worst. Without knowing the specifics, I meet people where they are, recognizing they may feel very lost and are deeply grieving. I am committed to a trauma-informed approach, making sure clients feel empowered with choices in a system that may otherwise leave them feeling powerless. No matter where they are in the litigation process, I appreciate helping them take charge of creating the next chapter of their life.

**AFCC:** *Your workshop with Leslie Drozd at the 16<sup>th</sup> Symposium is entitled, Should I Persist When My Child Resists. What is the premise of the workshop and an anticipated takeaway?*

**AA:** Let me give you a sneak preview! Leslie and I will be engaging the participants with core ideas that help parents prioritize their next step when they are not seeing their child. We are building off significant research to help parents answer practical questions. The workshop is all about looking through many different lenses to help professionals guide their clients to realistic outcomes. As you can expect, we won't shy away from controversial topics.

**AFCC:** *You are also part of the Preconference Institute with Marya Kolman on Advanced Issues in Mediation. How is mediation different than coaching?*

**AA:** Coaching takes mediation to a new level. As a coach, I find space to celebrate effort and every small step. I ask questions about the person, not the problem. It is holistic in nature and can help parents see their underlying needs that drive desired outcomes. Coaching is a path to gain self-awareness and articulate measures of success, which may not be included in mediation. We are looking for the impact of communication and behavior beyond just the words we hear.

**AFCC:** *As you explore creative solutions for court-involved families, what lessons have you learned about what parents embroiled in conflict have in common? How do these commonalities factor into which solutions work best?*

**AA:** The biggest lesson is no one likes to be told what to do. The more we try to use persuasion, the less movement we are going to see. The best motivator is genuine curiosity and listening.

**AFCC:** *How has your membership and involvement with AFCC, including leadership with the Ohio Chapter, played a role in your development as a professional?*

**AA:** I often hear myself saying I would not be doing this work without AFCC. I simply would not have the confidence if it were not for the many mentors, I met through AFCC and working at Overcoming Barriers. I met Judge Randy Fuller through AFCC and working in his court, in addition to my private practice, gives me a 360-degree view of the arena in which we work. I started my coach education program with AFCC in mind, to contribute to professional development for others out of appreciation of what I have received. I lean on those who have done research and been in the field for many years.

**AFCC:** *What advice would you offer new professionals who are interested in careers with family court matters?*

**AA:** Ask a lot of questions! And ask yourself if you have an innovative spirit, as our field changes so quickly. If you want to be part of resolving family conflict and making a difference – go for it. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Symposium here in my home state of Ohio. Please look for me and come up to say hello!

Join Amy Armstrong along with Marya Kolman and a team of Ohio experts for the Preconference Institute, *Advanced Issues in Mediation*, on Thursday, November 14th, 2024, at the **16<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Child Custody** in Columbus Ohio – and for Workshop #1 *Should I Persist When My Child Resists*, on Friday, November 15th at 10:30 AM with Leslie Drozd.