

Louisiana State Bar Association Children's Law Committee

Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 12pm

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions - Minutes from 2/5/2020 meeting approved.
2. COVID-19: Operations & Resources – *Ariel* – Organizations providing direct legal services gave brief updates on their modes of operation during COVID-19.
 - Mental Health Advocacy Services continues providing services and attending court both via zoom and in-person.
 - Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services – operations have not changed significantly; they are continuing to work remotely.
 - Supreme Court has maintained contact with attorneys and courts to work remotely. Juvenile court judges have done a good job keeping proceedings going forward remotely. If there are thoughts or concerns about going back to courtrooms, let Curtis Nelson know. The Supreme Court is also considering putting together task force for being better prepared to address COVID, disaster, etc.
 - Pelican Center mostly worked virtual beforehand. They do provide a lot of training opportunities, which are now becoming virtual trainings. Attendance has been good, reached more people geographically, and have enjoyed it being split into 2-hour events.
 - Judge Ernestine S. Gray in Orleans Parish Juvenile Court are working remotely via Zoom and not having any in-person proceedings until Fall.
 - Caddo Parish Juvenile is nearly fully functioning, holding CINC, delinquency, and custody cases all by Zoom.
 - Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court has been working remotely. The Clerk is taking filings by email and fax. They are working on reopening plans, which includes essentially a cell phone lot procedure for those that can't participate by Zoom. Staff will have masks, take temperatures, keep logs, etc. They will try to do a regular docket but will do as much as they can by Zoom.
 - CASA is putting together reopening guidelines, which integrates CDC guidelines, the Roadmap to Resilient Louisiana, and CASA's National guidelines. CASA programs will follow the lead of the courts. There are discussions about having staff and volunteers sign a waiver or consent form. Current state legislation is pending, and something may be released federally addressing these concerns.

Legal aid offices have been working on this, distributing surveys to provide guidance. Monte Mollere offered to put those interested in touch with legal aid office putting this together. Another resource is: <https://opensafely.la.gov/>.

- Metropolitan Human Services District has gone telehealth, which was planned before the pandemic, and their show rate has increased tremendously, particularly with addiction. They are still doing competency restoration remotely.
- Acadiana Legal Service Corporation is continuing to work by Zoom and Facetime.
- Louisiana Center Children's Rights has been working remotely. Social workers and youth advocates have continued reaching out to clients. They have spent a lot of time working on custody advocacy and getting children out of detention across the state.

3. Working Group Updates

a. Education Working Group - *Barbara*

- The group met with principals from elementary and high schools. The goal is to develop interventions during the school year to prevent entering the judicial system by using a trauma-focused approach. Curtis shared a copy of "My Community Cares," which describes the trauma programs being initiated in the juvenile courts in four parishes, that can potentially be used in schools.
- Reports this committee should review and consider:
 1. My Community Cares flyer
 2. Greater New Orleans Foundation's New Orleans School Partnership Study: What Our Students Need and How We Can Help:
https://issuu.com/greaterneworleansfoundation/docs/opsb_condensed_report
 3. New Orleans Children and Youth Planning Board's Call to Care report: https://www.nolacypb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Called-to-CareTask-Force-Report_FINAL_viewer.pdf

b. Trauma Informed Care Working Group – *Ariel* – This group continues to collect resources on trauma informed care to share with the committee.

- i. Bar Journal Special Edition Article – Joanna initiated the conversation regarding a special edition in the LSBA bar journal on trauma informed care, and the editorial board agreed if it was in relation to human-

trafficking. However, after discussions with the committee, a joint edition was declined. Monte and Stephanie will follow up with the publications department for an update.

1. Suggestions include: were a piece on sharing the experiences of COVID and how it has impacted the judiciary and COVID's effect on trauma.
4. Pelican Center Report – *Caitlin* – They are in the 4th quarter of the PIP with the goal being to enhance parent and children representation. The Juvenile Judges' bench book is being revised. Court documents are being revised to be in line with reasonable efforts findings, federal laws, state laws, and best practices. They're also working on the multidisciplinary representation team model in pilot parishes: Caddo, Rapides, East Baton Rouge, and Livingston. They're also working on improving out-of-court advocacy and representation at continued custody hearing. Curtis mentioned a new funding opportunity for the multidisciplinary representation team model.
5. Opinion Law Service – *Ariel* – The children's law section on the Opinion Law Services is up and running. Instructions to sign up will be circulated. This committee may need to revisit the scope of what types of cases they are getting.
6. Children's Law Awards – Due to COVID-19, the 2020 awards ceremony was postponed indefinitely. The awards will be mailed to the recipients. Once they all have been notified, we will announce and congratulate the winners.
7. Upcoming Trainings – https://clarola.org/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&view=events&layout=month&Itemid=115.
8. Other Business – The Louisiana State Bar Exam will be reduced to a 1-day exam occurring in July and October.
9. Adjournment