

Louisiana State Bar Association Children's Law Committee
April 10, 2019 - New Orleans, LA

In Attendance:

Ariel Test, Chair	Hector Linares
Danika Benjamin	Martha Maher
Pam Crawford	Curtis Nelson
Barbara Ferguson	Rebecca May Ricks
Jesse George	Hon. Kathleen Richey
Caitlin Glass	Courtney Schroeder
Franchesca Hamilton-Acker	Cherrilynne Thomas
Margot Hammond	Jennifer Womble
Barry LaCour	LSBA Staff: Joanna Laidler
Guy Lain	

1. Welcome & Introductions

Committee chair Ariel Test welcomed the committee.

2. Children's Law Award

Joanna Laidler congratulated Jack Harrison on being the recipient of the 2019 Children's Law Award. Joanna thanked committee members who participated in this year's award selection and voting process. Joanna also acknowledged the work of the other nominee for this year's awards, Hector Linares. This year, the Pro Bono Award Ceremony is taking place at the Supreme Court on May 21, 2019 from 5-7pm. Committee members are welcome to attend the award ceremony, but need to RSVP to Joanna.laidler@lsba.org if they wish to attend, as the Supreme Court/LSBA requires exact numbers for catering and security purposes.

3. Child Welfare "Specialization" status

At the last meeting Karen Hallstrom agreed to have a meeting with the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization about the steps/considerations required to have a state recognized children's legal specialization (incorporating juvenile justice). Unfortunately, Karen was unable to attend this meeting and so was unable to provide Committee members with an update. This issue is postponed until the next meeting.

4. Pelican Center Report

Curtis Nelson provided a Pelican Center Report on behalf of Mark Harris. He noted that the Pelican Center will have externships over the summer involving law students, and that they would like to have one of the externs work on a research issue for the Committee. Starting date would be around end of May, 2019.

Barbara Ferguson circulated handout with information about 'Federal Funds for Specific Groups of Children'. Noted that while there is federal funding for children with disabilities, Louisiana also receives federal funding for economically disadvantaged children. Previously there was no cause of action. However, the Louisiana Pupil Progression Plan requires all 4th graders who do not achieve at least Basic in two of the four state assessments to have an Individual Improvement Plan. Additionally, there is also funding for 'neglected, delinquent, and at-risk children'. The Louisiana State Plan requires institutions which house juvenile delinquent services to provide educational and follow up support systems for youth transitioning out of institutional care.

Curtis Nelson, Mark Harris, and Barbara Ferguson met in February 2019 to discuss advocacy for disadvantaged children and youth. Curtis suggested that the Committee establish an education subcommittee/ working group to research and collect data in relation to this issue in order to address some of the issues happening in the courts. Curtis, Mark, Barbara, Hector Linares and Franchesca Hamilton-Acker volunteered to be part of the new subcommittee. The subcommittee will arrange a meeting prior to the next Committee meeting.

5. Updating the Becoming an Adult Brochure

At the last meeting, some committee members had volunteered to review the Becoming an Adult Brochure and provide comments on necessary updates. Ariel noted that she had circulated some proposed changes but had not received responses. She advised that the majority of changes identified were minor or obvious and did not require additional committee input.

6. Law School Trainings/Special Education

On March 27, Ariel Test, Rebecca May-Ricks, and Kellie Johnson provided a presentation on special education law to the LSU Juvenile Defense Clinic staffed by Madalyn Wasilczuk. The Presentation was aimed at students and had an interactive component. Hon. Kathleen Richey suggested that the training would be relevant for CASA volunteers and will reach out to Ariel or Joanna to discuss.

Student representatives from Tulane's Public Interest & Disability Rights groups requested a skills-based 'interview bootcamp', with a focus on working with children, indigent clients, clients requiring an interpreter and clients with disabilities. Margot Hammond, Parris Taylor, Deborah Weinberg met to discuss format, content, and timing. The training will be held in mid-September and will be designed to provide practical interviewing experience. The training is intended to be offered to other law schools and as a CLE for newly admitted attorneys.

7. Children's Law Opinion Service

At the last meeting, Jack Harrison noted that he was interested in establishing a children's law opinion service and Joanna Laidler said she would research whether it was possible to host an children's law specific opinion service through the LSBA.

Joanna provided demonstrated of how to access LSBA Opinion Law Service [LSBA Home Page > Members Resources > Tools & Services]. The service allows members to obtain the latest opinions released from Louisiana appellate courts (first, second, third, fourth and fifth circuits) and the Louisiana Supreme Court. By subscribing to this service, LSBA members can

automatically receive appellate court opinions via automatic e-mail notifications. The opinions are compiled by students/law clerks at LSU and then entered into LSBA system. The service does not cost anything for bar members. The LSBA advised that it would be possible to add a 'children's law checklist' to the current service. However, there are the following limitations:

- The Committee would not be able to prepare the opinions.
- Will only receive updates for Louisiana appellate courts.
- Service only available for attorneys.
- Would not be able to include additional categories e.g. juveniles, adoptions.

Joanna noted that there were free programs available that could be utilized by the Committee including Listserv Light and Google Groups. Curtis advised that CLARO might be able to host listserv through their site, which is currently undergoing site upgrades. Joanna to contact Mark and Curtis separately to discuss.

The Committee decided they wanted to pursue both options. They want to request the LSBA to add a check box capturing children's law cases and they want to establish a separate Children's' Law Opinion Service hosted separately.

8. Louisiana Children's Trust Fund

Franchesca Hamilton-Acker explained the grant applications for the Children's Trust fund were due in February 2019 and the grant steering Committee is currently deciding how to allocate the grant funds. The Children's Trust Fund is having a 'Capital Day' on April 11, 2019.

9. Upcoming Trainings

Child Wellbeing Summit on May 7-8 (Baton Rouge): focus is early childhood, impact of trauma on baby's brain, various prevention and intervention services, brain architecture game.

10. Other Business

LaKeisha J. Johnson suggested that the Committee prepare a bar journal article relating to ICWA and recent legal challenge to its constitutionality. Committee discussed timing of the article and decided that we should wait until US 5th Circuit Court of Appeal hand down their decision. Hon. Kathleen Richey suggested that the Committee should contact Anne Simon.

11. Adjournment – Last meeting for this bar year

The Committee will organize dates for next Committee meetings as soon as possible. If committee members have people that are interested in joining the committee, please advise them to contact Joanna or the LSBA.