

Louisiana State Bar Association Children's Law Committee
January 16, 2019 - New Orleans, LA

In Attendance:

Karen Hallstrom, Chair	Barry LaCour
Ariel Test, Chair	Guy Lain
Danika Benjamin	Martha Maher
Talya Bergeron	Jennifer Medley
Michael Brown	Curtis Nelson
Pam Crawford	Thailund Porter-Green
Jerry Deason	Rebecca May Ricks
Kristian Dobard	Hon. Kathleen Richey
Steven Farber	Courtney Schroeder
Barbara Ferguson	Mark Semien
Jesse George	Angela Smith
Caitlin Glass	Cherrilyne Thomas
Franchesca Hamilton-Acker	Jacqueline Williams
Margot Hammond	Jennifer Womble
Mark Harris	LSBA Staff: Joanna Laidler
Jack Harrison	
Kellie Johnson	

1. Welcome & Introductions

Committee chairs Karen Hallstrom and Ariel Test welcomed the committee. Joanna Laidler introduced herself as new LSBA staff liaison for Children's Law Committee.

2. Legislative Update

Karen Hallstrom provided committee members with a summary of 2018 case law and legislation prepared for the Juvenile Judges conference. Important legislative changes in 2018 included amendments relating to adoption and the incorporation of the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act. Significant caselaw included several juvenile delinquency cases and a Supreme Court opinion on guardianship in CINC. Material will be available on the CLARO website. Consideration was given to whether the materials should also be posted on LSBA website. Please note that this document does not necessarily include all judicial decisions and legislative amendments from 2018.

Kathleen Richey noted that a survey was disseminated yesterday as part of the Child Protection Act Commission. The survey is for professionals or volunteers working in the child welfare system, including disqualifying crimes. Please email Kathleen Richey at krichey@louisianacasa.org to request a copy of the survey.

3. Child Welfare “Specialization” Status

The National Association of Counsel for Children in conjunction with the American Bar Association allows children’s attorneys in Louisiana to obtain national accreditation in Child Welfare Law. The Committee discussed whether it would be advantageous to ask the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization to recognize the national accreditation at a state level and what practical difference it would make. Committee members raised concerns that state recognition by the LSBA would require attorneys to pay additional annual fees. Karen Hallstrom will have a general discussion with the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization about the steps/considerations required to have a state recognized children’s legal specialization (incorporating juvenile justice). Karen will collect information and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

4. Pelican Center Report

CWLS: There are presently 29 Louisiana attorneys, certified as Child Welfare Law Specialists with the National Association of Counsel for Children. There are six additional slots available if additional practitioners wish to apply. Once practitioners are certified there are ongoing requirements. The Pelican Center has pledged to underwrite expenses associated with the child welfare specialization whilst the practitioners continue to practice child welfare.

Training: The Pelican Center circulated the 2019 training calendar. To view the catalogue, please [click here](#). The training events will be held state-wide. Committee members were asked to share the training calendar with their professional networks, including CASA volunteers. The Pelican Center confirmed that the CLEs have been approved. The Pelican Center is excited to host Jennifer Renne from the ABA to talk about child safety. Child safety is recognized as an area that needs growth and improvement.

Child and Family Services Review: Louisiana is in midst of large state-wide review of the child welfare system by the Children’s Bureau in Washington and the regional office in Dallas. The review is designed to look at how well the state is achieving ‘safety, permanency, and wellbeing’ for children in the child welfare system and those at-risk of entering the system. There are 3-4 areas of improvement that will be the subject of a Program Improvement Plan, including safety and permanency. Committee members interested in being part of the Program Improvement Plan advisory group should contact Mark Harris at the Pelican Center (mark.harris@pelicancenter.org).

Federal Funding Reimbursements (CINC): The Children’s Bureau Administration recently issued an amendment to the Child Welfare Policy Manual which makes available the possibility of federal funding reimbursements to the state for the provision of legal services to children and parents in CINC. We are in the process of determining what that means and how it will be implemented.

5. Updating the Becoming an Adult Brochure

Committee members were asked to review the Becoming an Adult Brochure and provide comments on necessary updates. Barbara Ferguson, Franchesca Hamilton Acker, and Ariel Test volunteered to review current brochure and make suggested amendments based on legislative changes. If other committee members want to assist, please email Ariel Test or Joanna Laidler.

6. Law School Trainings/Special Education

Law School Training: The Committee conducts outreach to law schools by providing “skills” courses and hosting informal lunches to talk about careers in Children’s Law. We hope to host an event at each of the four law schools this year. Joanna has contacted three law schools and is looking for appropriate contacts for Southern University. Joanna will email the Committee with specific dates to sign up. The Committee provided feedback about trainings/topics relevant to students:

- Jesse George/ Jennifer Womble / David Williams – ABC’s of Child Welfare Law (provided training at Loyola in 2018);
- Jennifer Womble – Loyola has requested CLE on adoption (Hector Linares);
- Jennifer Womble hosted a CLE on adoption last year. She would be willing to host another training as there was a lot of interest in the last session;
- Combination training with LSPD Committee – Interdiction and Emancipation – Legal Status;
- Ariel Test - Hector Linares wants to offer his students skills training; and
- Steven Farber - driver’s license/documentation for students.

Special Education: Ariel Test explained that there was discussion about providing an additional Special Education Advocacy training. She is not sure whether special education is still an area of need for attorneys, but suggested that we would offer the training if a law school is interested in hosting.

Advocacy for at-risk Children: Barbara Ferguson thought the Committee should do more to advocate for disadvantaged children. The Pelican Center agreed to invite committee members to a meeting to discuss education advocacy for at-risk children.

7. Children’s Law Opinion Service

The LSBA Opinions 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. Jack Harrison suggested that the Committee establish an opinion service focusing on children’s law. The Committee discussed who would prepare the briefs and how people would be able access the opinions. The Committee is interested in establishing opinion service and committee members are willing to

create abstracts for relevant opinions. For the next meeting, Joanna Laidler will find out what is required to establish an opinion service through the LSBA.

8. Upcoming Trainings

- Pelican Center Trainings, click [here](#).
- COPPA Annual Conference, New Orleans March 7-10, click [here](#).
- Upcoming trainings from CLARO, click [here](#).

9. Other Business

Committee Website: Reminder to committee members to send relevant news and resources to Joanna Laidler so that she can update the website. The Committee wants to develop the website's resources for attorneys.

Bar Journal Article: If Committee Members are interested in submitting bar journal articles, the next submission dates are February 6 and April 3.

Human Trafficking: The Governor's Office has recently announced grants to address human trafficking in Louisiana. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Louisiana Children's Trust Fund: Announcement was released this week for grant applications for 2019/20 fiscal year. Please [click here](#) for additional information.

Children's Law Awards: Children's law nominations are now open. People have until February 22, 2019 to nominate someone for an award. The website to nominate people is www.lsba.org/atj/probonoawards.

10. Adjournment – next meeting April 10