

2018 Georgia CASA Conference
August 4, 2018
Renaissance Waverly Hotel & Convention Center
Atlanta, Ga

Workshop Block I: 10:30 – 11:45

Termination of Parental Rights

*Jerry Bruce, Program Attorney for J4C, Division of Communications, Children, Families and the Courts
Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts*

This workshop will review the basic elements of and requirements for termination of parental rights (TPR). Pitfalls, delays and common misconceptions related to TPR will also be addressed.

Ensuring Objectivity in CASA Court Reports: Visits, Interactions & More

*Emily Dant, Advocacy Coordinator, Athens-Oconee CASA, Children First, Inc.
Mary-Eleanor Joyce, SafeCare Program Coordinator, Children First, Inc.
Tasha Nicholson, Advocacy Coordinator, Athens-Oconee CASA, Children First, Inc.*

This workshop will provide participants with tools and techniques to objectively report observations of parent-child interactions, visitations and other common observed events relevant to the role of CASA volunteers. Examples of common tools used to notate observations will be provided and participants will have the opportunity to practice translating observations into objective statements for CASA reports.

Art of Resolution - Intersection of Conflict & Vulnerability

Jamila Chapman-Brown, CM & OE Consultant/Difficult Dialogue Facilitator

This workshop will focus on the art of resolution and workshop participants will leave being more informed and self-aware about the stages of conflict, vulnerability and their role in managing conflict and providing a safe space for all parties to be vulnerable. We will define vulnerability, conflict and resolution; identify the stages of vulnerability, conflict and conflict management styles; and design resolutions that are all-inclusive and free of shaming and/or blaming.

An Overview of Psychotropic Medications for the Non-Medical Professional

Amber Hammontree, MA LPC, AMERICGROUP Community Care - Georgia Families 360° Program

This workshop will provide an overview of the five classes of psychotropic medications, including a discussion of the disorders and symptoms treated. The common signs of adverse reactions and side effects will be discussed. We will also review the importance of medication management appointments and appropriate medication storage. Lastly, an overview of how the Georgia Families 360°SM Care Coordination team can help members participating in the program will be provided.

State of Child Welfare: Current Policy & Practical Priorities

Melissa D. Carter, Executive Director, Barton Child Law & Policy Center, Emory Law School

This workshop will reflect on the current state of Georgia's child welfare system, including an update on DFCS budget conditions, current trends in foster care growth and safety of children in the community, and recent policy changes impacting vulnerable children and families.

The MAACademy Experience: Creating Connections, Embracing Partnerships & Empowering Youth

Erica Davis-Woods, Regional Practice Administrator, Multi-Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC)

Dyonne Miles, Training Coordinator, Multi-Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC)

Participants in this workshop will gain insight into how to effectively create out-of-the-box ways to forge and nourish partnerships, how to provide specialized approaches to better engage youth in care and how to meet their needs across multiple domains (i.e. education, permanency and transition to adulthood).

Talking to Children Who Have Experienced Abuse

Kari Viola-Brooke, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, CAC Director, Child Enrichment, Inc.

This workshop will discuss ways to build rapport with children you are working with. It will discuss direct and indirect ways children disclose abuse as well as appropriate, non-leading ways to react when a child discloses. This workshop will also cover important steps to take after a disclosure is made.

Developing and Maintaining Effective Strategies for Collaborative Relationships with your Juvenile Court and County DFCS

Christopher G. Hemfling, CWLS, Special Assistance Attorney General, DFCS

The Hon. Maureen Wood, CWLS, Rockdale County Juvenile Court

Serving as a CASA involves interaction with a number of local stakeholders. Two of the most important players in Dependency proceedings are your juvenile court and county DFCS office. Developing a collaborative relationship with these entities aides the important work of CASA organizations and their volunteers. This interactive workshop will provide attendees with effective strategies for building a collaborative relationship and include a group discussion regarding other utilized practices throughout the State.

Workshop Block II: 1:45 – 3:00

Ask the Judges

The Hon. Amanda Heath, Augusta Circuit Juvenile Court

The Hon. Michael Key, Troup County Juvenile Court

The Hon. John B. Sumner, Cherokee County Juvenile Court

The Hon. Jan Wheeler, Appalachian Circuit Juvenile Court

The Hon. Maureen Wood, CWLS, Rockdale County Juvenile Court

Moderator: Tom Rawlings, Executive Director, Office of the Child Advocate

This interactive workshop will give CASA volunteers the opportunity to engage in dialogue with a panel of judges on issues of the law, process, procedure and the philosophy of child welfare. Come prepared to ask questions about how decisions are made, the importance of volunteer advocacy, how the CASA volunteers' reports and recommendations are used, how the law is interpreted, what changes they wish to see in child welfare, and how we can work together to ensure children and youth have safe, permanent homes. Please note that no specific cases can be discussed.

The Youngest Survivors: Advocating for Children & Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence

Michelle White, LMSW, Child & Youth Project Manager, Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

This workshop will provide a brief overview of best practices for advocating for children exposed to domestic violence. Participants will receive training on the developmental impacts of trauma on children exposed to domestic violence, best practices to work with and empower the non-abusive caregiver and strategies to develop a child-centered safety plan.

Tapping into the Hidden Volunteer Market

Danita Scott, National Training and Leadership Specialist, Danita Scott LLC

Finding the right volunteers for your organization can prove to be a difficult and time consuming job. Once you find the right volunteers, keeping them engaged and excited is another task all together. In this workshop, Danita shares the keys to tapping into your hidden volunteer market. This workshop will empower your staff and volunteers to speak confidently and passionately about your cause and to help keep moving your mission forward by attracting and retaining the right volunteers.

Georgia Families 360°SM Program: An Overview

Gloria Brown, Georgia Families 360° Community Relations Representative, AMERIGROUP Community Care - Georgia Families 360° Program

This workshop will provide an overview of the Georgia Families 360°SM program. Topics that will be discussed will include eligibility benefits, additional programs and services for GF360° members, and the different ways to access the care coordination team.

DFCS Policies & Practice

Tammy Reed, Placement & Permanency Services Director, Georgia Division of Family & Children Services

This workshop will highlight key priorities and practices for timely and lasting permanency for children in foster care. The Division's plan for a strengthened kinship continuum and steps toward execution of this important goal will be discussed. An overview of the initial planning and ongoing requirements related to the federal Families First Prevention Services Act will be shared. There will also be an opportunity to dialogue with the Placement & Permanency Services Director regarding issues of importance from the CASA lens.

Succession Planning & Building "Bench Strength"

Rosalind Alston, Director of Advocacy, Twin Cedars Youth & Family Services, Inc.

Mike Angstadt, Consultant

Leadership change will occur in every organization. Sometimes this is a planned process, such as retirement. In other circumstances, illness, new opportunities or a termination may take place. Learn ways and means to prepare for these types of changes, while correspondingly building "bench strength" throughout the organization.

Our Work, Their Rights: Supporting Youth Through the Student Disciplinary Process

Maribel Bell, Director of Student Discipline with Fulton Schools

Robin Brooks, EPAC District Education Manger, Georgia Division of Family & Children Services

Leia Williams, EPAC District Education Manager, Georgia Division of Family & Children Services

This workshop will give an overview of the student disciplinary process. EPAC representatives will lead a discussion of the role of DFCS and CASA with regards to supporting foster youth through the student disciplinary process.

Trauma & Brain Science, Changing the Way We Work with Families

Child Welfare Training Collaborative

Ever wondered why the behavior of some children, youth and/or caregivers seems so bizarre? Information will be shared on the impact of trauma on children and caregiver's behaviors, as well as developmental and brain chemistry changes and the long-term effects on neural connections and physiological responses in caregivers who have experienced trauma. Participants will be energized with new ideas and actionable steps to effectively engage the family.

Workshop Block III: 3:15 – 4:30

Improving Court Outcomes for Children: Systemic Challenges and Opportunities

Tom Rawlings, J.D., CWLS, Director, Georgia Office of the Child Advocate

In this workshop, the Director of Georgia's Office of the Child Advocate will discuss how important good representation and procedure in juvenile court are to obtaining stability and permanency for children. Tom will review current challenges facing child advocates and discuss opportunities to improve representation for children, transparency, and court procedure.

You Can't See What You Don't Know: How CASAs can Support Clients with Special Needs

Donnie Kanter Winokur, President of FASDempowered and The Chancer Chronicles, Ltd. & member of the Georgia CAPTA Panel - Children's Justice Act Committee

According to the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS), 70 % of children in foster care are affected by prenatal alcohol exposure in varying degrees. When CASAs, social workers and other involved professionals understand and address the underlying causes of behaviors, their interventions and support are likely to be more effective. Participants will learn how fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) have become a hidden public health crisis and disproportionately impact the juvenile justice system. The CDC estimates that 1 in 20 school-age children in the U.S. may be fetal alcohol exposed.

Participants will also have a better understanding of the impact these challenges have on infants, children and families who experience these disorders in at-risk environments and recognize what questions need to be addressed in families to illuminate possible alcohol and substance abuse.

Fundraising & Friendraising: Engaging your Board to Support your Mission

Elizabeth Runkle, Senior Consultant, Georgia Center for Nonprofits

Learn how to engage and empower your board to support your organization in fundraising. Many boards struggle to find a way to enhance fundraising activities. Participants will learn how to identify the roles board members can play and tools that can support board members in raising funds.

Resources to Help Children Thrive

Naeshia McDowell, Program Coordinator, Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

It takes parents, caregivers and supportive RESOURCES to help children thrive. As professionals, you know parents are often in complex situations and need professional and community support. This workshop will explore barriers to meeting families' basic needs and linking families to resources through concrete support and the 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline to help prevent child maltreatment.

EmpowerMENT Through Our Eyes: Here are My Rights

Anthony Stover, Regional Impact Coordinator, MAAC/Georgia EmpowerMENT

This workshop was created by current and former foster youth to help educate their peers on the rights of youth as they enter and exit foster care. Hear from EmpowerMENT Advocates as they share their personal experiences through an interactive and engaging presentation. Come and understand the importance of the policies, laws and practices that make a difference in the lives of the young people with whom you work.

Understanding Trauma and Becoming a Trauma Informed Court System

The Hon. Michael Key, Troup County Juvenile Court

Participants will have the opportunity to more fully understand what trauma is, the numbers around trauma, the impact of trauma on children (and adults), and how communities can respond to trauma by implementing trauma informed care throughout the community.

Cultural Humility: I Don't See Color

LaFayette Young, Jr., Advocacy Specialist, Georgia CASA

This workshop is not to solve the mystery of race and its importance but to help participants consider the population served when accepting and assigning volunteers. Participants will be asked to think about the CASA mission and how the belief systems & social constructs of volunteers relate to race, biases, and prejudices.

In Pursuit of the Best Interests of a Child

Angela Tyner, J.D., CWLS, Advocacy Director, Georgia CASA

The new code brought guidance for judges and GALs alike regarding the elusive “best interests of the child” standard for Georgia dependency cases. Four years after the code’s implementation, the factors are often not directly seen or relied upon in GAL and CASA reports or recommendations, which would help to provide stronger evidence and support for child-centered decisions. This workshop delves into the 20 best interest factors, exploring criteria that parties may consider in building their cases and that CASA advocates can use to formulate and support their recommendations.