

## 2019 Georgia CASA Conference Workshops & Speakers

### Block I

#### **State of Child Welfare: Current Policy & Practical Priorities - Melissa D. Carter, Barton Child Law & Policy Center, Emory Law School**

This workshop, presented by a leading state policy expert, provides participants with critical and timely information 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 federal and state policy changes impacting vulnerable children and families and the future of the child welfare system.

#### **Education Advocacy: What Works and What Doesn't Work – Janet Goldin, DeKalb County CASA**

This workshop will cover the basics of CASA advocacy for the educational rights of youth in care and the difference between various school supports, interventions, and plans, and the latest practice and trends in education in Georgia. Participants will walk away with ideas on what is and isn't helpful for education advocacy.

#### **Addressing Barriers to Advocacy – Angela Tyner, Jerry Bruce, Rachel Davidson, & Chris Hempfling**

Experience how state agency leaders approach case-level and systemic barriers encountered by advocates and other system partners to inform and help address changes. Come hear from four key agency child welfare leaders about their collaborative approach and relationships that allow for nuanced, complex, and critical review of real-time barriers, processes and opportunities that can lead to practical suggestions, and fixes that can strengthen the system and support stronger outcomes for children and families.

#### **Supporting Older Youth Transitioning from Foster Care – Candis L. Jones, LAPC, Georgia DFCS**

This workshop will provide an overview of the services available to young people in foster care to support their successful transition into adulthood. Also provided will be an overview of the development of the upcoming Connections Program that extends foster care services for young people ages 18-21. Participants will be challenged to identify their values around working with young people and emerging young adults who desire independence while still in foster care.

#### **Trauma STARS: An Overview of Trauma Informed Practice – Rita Mathis, CHRIS 180**

This workshop is designed to provide participants with an understanding of the broad and life-shaping impacts of trauma. Participants will gain an increased understanding of trauma, implications of complex trauma exposure, define toxic stress and secondary trauma, and explore considerations for trauma-informed practice strategies that are used to enhance interactions and engagement with those who have been exposed to trauma.

#### **Building Board Engagement and Partnership with Your Board – Elizabeth Runkle, Georgia Center for Nonprofits**

A high functioning board can move a nonprofit organization forward. Maintaining the right balance of support and space for self-accountability can be difficult. This workshop will review how to increase the functionality of a nonprofit board and how effective engagement strategies can help you reach your goals. This workshop will govern how to implement board engagement strategies to foster the partnership between boards and staff.

#### **Affirming LGBTQ Youth in Care – Kalie J. Lounds, Hillside, Inc.**

As providers, we want the best for all of the youth we serve, which includes special considerations for providing affirming care for LGBTQ youth in foster care. This workshop will cover basic definitions

surrounding sexuality, gender, and gender identity and expression, while allowing participants space to examine their own perceptions around sexuality and gender while engaging in a caring professional role. Participants will discuss strategies for developing safe and inclusive spaces while building techniques to advocate and empower our LGBTQ youth.

**Resolving Conflict: What's Your Style? – Lainie Jenkins, TLC CASA**

Whether working with adults in crisis, collaborative partners, work mates, or at home, we all face conflict. How effective we are in resolving conflict depends on our basic underlying temperament and personality, our current environment, our conflict style, and our understanding of the conflict styles of those with whom we engage. Participants will assess their own style, gain insights, and may even walk away with a few surprises about themselves.

**Adolescent Brain Development: Youth Thrive**

This workshop will cover brain development in adolescence, the second most critical and the second most vulnerable developmental period in one's lifespan. The workshop will also include discussion about protective and promotive factors that support successful transition to adulthood and connect life experiences with research-driven approaches to improving outcomes for adolescent-age youth.

**Plans of Safe Care and Zero to Three: A Collaborative Approach – Judge Walker, et al.**

A Plan of Safe Care addresses the immediate safety, substance use treatment needs, and health of the substance use exposed infant and family. This workshop provides an overview of the legal requirements and highlights of how the Plan of Safe Care may change when it is developed during pregnancy, birth, the postpartum period, and the benefits of early intervention. Topics also include peer support for caregivers, DFCS special circumstances policy, and collaboration between community partners. Lastly, learn about The Baby Steps Recovery Program and Douglas County's local Zero To Three program with its intensive case management and collaboration to make certain infants and toddlers get the best start possible with direct applications for CASA advocacy.

**Block II**

**DFCS Policy & Practice – Mary Havick**

**Branding Fundamentals – Necole Merritt, National CASA Association**

Learn how to take National CASA's new awareness campaign, Change a Child's Story, from concept to execution. This workshop will provide an overview of the national awareness campaign reach and scope as well as showcase tools and resources available to CASA affiliates to help maximize exposure and influence.

**Ask the Judges**

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.

**Fostering Stability: Preventing Adoption and Placement Disruptions – Bonnie O. Lockwood, IPC, Cornerstones Counseling Center**

This workshop will address common reasons that lead to disrupted placements and adoptions for youth in the foster care system. We will discuss what to expect behaviorally from children with trauma and attachment issues. This workshop will also cover resources that promote good mental health, bonding, and attachment for youth and their families.

**Writing Effective Court Reports: Angela Tyner, Georgia CASA, & Lori Pupp, CASA of Forsyth County**

More than 40 years after CASA's inception, the court report remains CASA's primary mechanism for advocacy. This session will offer a preview of the new state CASA report template; available this fall using CPRS (spell out). This session will highlight ways in which CASA advocates can make their analyses and recommendations more persuasive to the court.

**Managing Employment Law Risks in the CASA Workplace - Lori Shapiro, Employment Counsel, Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta**

The focus of this workshop will be on the lifecycle of an employee, from hiring to termination, with discussion of potential employment law risks at each step of the process. This session will provide guidance on how employees are different from independent contractors and volunteers, hiring new employees, classifying employees correctly under the Fair Labor Standards Act, managing performance issues, addressing and investigating employee concerns, and how to minimize risk when terminating employees.

**The Intimate Community: Strengthening Relationships to Support Families – Tammy Reed, Georgia DFCS**

This workshop will explore the DFCS vision for strengthening the involvement of kin, fictive kin, and existing community relationships in supporting families and children. New federal and state legislation brings significant opportunity to redefine child welfare, and central to that opportunity is the engagement of family and community. Maximizing connections to adults with whom the child has a strong relationship is a primary area of focus in order to minimize trauma for children when they must be separated from their parents. During our time together, we will explore how CASA will be a primary partner in this exciting work.

**The Impact of Maternal Substance Abuse on Child Development: What Do We Know? – Dr. Karen Kuehn Howell**

This workshop will discuss the impact that maternal substance abuse and prenatal exposure have on a young child. We will review the impact of prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs, and illegal drugs, such as marijuana, on a child's ultimate developmental outcomes. We will also discuss the conditions that maternal substance abuse may be associated with, including disease, prematurity, sub-optimal caretaking, poverty, exposure to violence, neglect, and maternal psychopathology. Finally, interventions and resources for children impacted by maternal substance abuse will be discussed.

**Handing Youth a Bullhorn: The Importance of and Best Practices for Raising a Youth's Voice – Rachel Davidson, Office of the Child Advocate, & Chris Hempfling, Deputy Director and General Counsel, Georgia DFCS**

When a child in foster care doesn't have a "seat at the table," feelings of fear and loss may be exacerbated. Continually including youth in the decision-making process and helping youth raise their voices - both in and out of court – can assist with an increased sense of understanding and confidence that the system is working for their best interests. This workshop will address the importance of a child's voice and presence; include a discussion of current laws, policies, and practices; and provide practical tools, recommendations, and resources that can be utilized to enhance the involvement of youth.

**An Overview of Psychotropic Medications for the Non-Medical Professional – Amber Hammontree, MA LPC, Amerigroup/Georgia Families 360 Program**

This presentation provides an overview of the five classes of psychotropic medications, including a discussion of the disorders and symptoms treated. Also discussed will be the common signs of adverse reactions and side effects of various medications. A review of the importance of medication

management appointments and appropriate medication storage will be included as well as how the Georgia Families 360°SM Care Coordination team support members participating in the program.

### **Block III**

#### **Cultural Humility: I Don't See Color – LaFayette Young, Jr.**

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 CASA volunteers. Participants will be asked to consider the National CASA mission and how the belief systems and social constructs of advocates relate to race, biases, and prejudices.

#### **Special Education 101: What You Need to Know to Start the Year Off Right - Leslie Lipson, Lipson Advocacy**

This introductory workshop is for foster parents, case managers, CASAs, judges, teachers, and others who work with foster children who are just beginning to understand special education law. Participants will learn basic special education law and procedure as well as strategies and practice tips to navigate educational equity challenges for students with disabilities. An overview of IDEA and Section 504 will be included and will focus on the legal mandates of FAPE (free and appropriate public education), Child-Find, and LRE (least restrictive environment).

#### **Promise of Permanency – Jerry Bruce & Angela Tyner**

When the State removes children from their homes, there is an implied promise to effect permanency for children both timely and compassionately, and with as little damage as possible. In this workshop, participants will discuss factors that should be considered in determining the most appropriate permanency goal for each child and family. For decades, federal policy has driven adoption as a preferred permanency option for children in foster care. Because of this, termination of parental rights and adoption has become the second most common permanency option in Georgia, outstripping less drastic outcomes. Relational permanency is often overlooked in the rush for the “more permanent” legal outcome. It may be time to re-think what permanency means for children in foster care.

#### **The HOPE of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) – Deborah Chosewood, Prevention and Community Support (PCS) section, Georgia DFCS**

This workshop will provide an introduction to the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, the science behind the ACEs data, and what can be done to prevent ACEs in Georgia's children. Hear directly from the state team tasked with managing federal and state funding streams supporting programs and initiatives to prevent child maltreatment.

#### **Appointed to Advocate: Strengthening CASA's Courtroom Presence - Judge Altman**

You are the court's witness. Therefore, know what the court is listening and looking for. Learn to strengthen your in-court advocacy and presence through improving your written reports and in-court testimony. This workshop will include practical tips on how to testify, answer questions from judges and lawyers, introduce new information, make recommendations for services, placement, and permanency, and increase your credibility as a witness and advocate.

#### **Want a Good Plan? Get Strategic - Sayge Medlin, Public Service Faculty, J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development**

Whether the first, last, or one in a string of many, too often strategic planning processes bring heartburn and result in products that hardly seem connected to work we inevitably do in response to the day-to-day, real-life needs of the world around us. We can positively affect the usefulness of our planning by understanding all that a plan can (and can't) offer, exactly what results we want and need from a planning process, and then working to craft a process to meet our organization's current resources and needs. In this interactive session, participants will learn the basic components of all successful planning efforts and leave with action steps that get them closer to meeting their own planning needs.

**Parental Incarceration and Its Effects on Children and Families – Dr. Christina Semple, The Community Groundbridge, LLC**

In this workshop, current research will be reviewed regarding the impact of parental incarceration on children and families. As advocates, participants will explore valuable and applicable resources to support their work with children who have a parent in jail or prison. Attendees will gain an understanding of the emotional, social, and psychological ways the children they serve experience a parent who is incarcerated and, more importantly, what they can do to help.

**Engaging and Utilizing Student Interns and Volunteers in CASA Operations – Athens Oconee CASA staff**

At Athens-Oconee CASA, student interns have become a vital component of the CASA team. Student interns bring in an innovative perspective during their time with the CASA program. Interns serve in various capacities, including coordination of speaking engagements, leading in-service trainings, taking notes in court, securing donations for trainings and volunteer appreciation, and producing our very first recruitment video. This workshop will demonstrate how student interns have improved and expanded our program for the better and inspire other CASA programs to utilize student interns and volunteers in program expansion!

**Through Our Eyes: Legal Rights for Youth in Care – MAAC/Georgia EmpowerMENT & Anthony Stovall**

This workshop is created and facilitated by young people who are currently or were formerly in Georgia's foster care system. These interactive workshops are designed to teach youth and adult supporters about the importance of certain laws, policies, practices, and resources that will help youth successfully transition through the foster care system.

**What Every CASA Volunteer Should Know About Reasonable Efforts – Judge Michael Key, Troup County Juvenile Court**

In this workshop, participants will learn the basics around reasonable efforts legal requirements to keep families together, to reunify families when they have to be separated, and to achieve permanency through some other plan when reunification is not possible, all within a time frame that is consistent with the child's developmental needs. Participants will also gain an understanding of the roles of others involved in child welfare cases, and specifically what CASA volunteers can do to promote reasonable efforts.