



AFCC Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

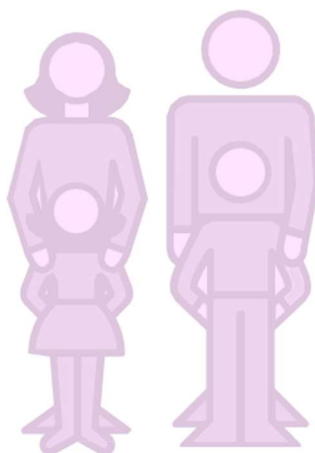
AFCC Online Training Program

Beyond the Basics: Advanced Training on Parent-Child Contact Problems

Newly expanded for 2026, with enriched content for mental health professionals and added focus for lawyers, judges, and other family law roles.

Bonus: *Includes a new three-hour recorded primer to help participants build a strong foundation for this elevated, advanced training.*

January 12-15, 2026



Training Team

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP

Leslie M. Drozd, PhD

Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP

Hon. Harvey A. Silberman (Ret.)

Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD

Louise T. Truax, JD

Peggie A. Ward, PhD



Sponsored by
SOBERLINK
Proving Sobriety, Improving Lives

AFCC is the premier interdisciplinary international association of professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict.

Advanced Training on Parent-Child Contact Problems

Newly expanded for 2026, with enriched content for mental health professionals and added focus for lawyers, judges, and other family law roles.

Bonus: Includes a new three-hour recorded primer to help participants build a strong foundation for this elevated, advanced training.

January 12-15, 2026

AFCC's newly enhanced comprehensive online training program on the presentation and management of parent-child contact problems that arise in family court matters. Facilitated by a team of leading practitioners and trainers, this program features newly developed dramatized clips and an expanded faculty that now includes a judge and an experienced family law attorney. Participants will explore cutting-edge interventions designed for judges, attorneys, clinicians, and other family court professionals. The program will take place online over four days, with two two-hour sessions each day. Recordings will be available to registrants.

The experienced faculty will employ a multimedia approach to introduce a fictional family that reflects many of the complex dynamics professionals encounter when working with parent-child contact problems in the field. Participants will learn effective strategies for assessing these cases, including allegations and cross-allegations, identifying underlying causes, and developing nuanced approaches to resolution. The program will emphasize how to develop and test multiple hypotheses and craft recommendations that maximize successful outcomes while minimizing risks for families. Through video clips, teaching concepts, and group discussion, attendees will engage in a detailed examination of parent-child contact problems and the challenges that frequently arise in practice.

This program will incorporate both foundational and advanced concepts, including:

- A definition of parent-child contact problems (PCCPs)
- An overview of family dynamics and interrelationships
- Risk associated with "concept creep" and use of accurate terms to describe the dynamic
- Individual, interpersonal, and external factors that influence parent-child dynamics and intervention outcomes
- Multiple factors that predispose, precipitate, and perpetuate PCCPs
- Misaligned goals among family members and professionals in different roles within a case
- Family violence, and the different types of control that may occur, including coercive control
- Screening tools for family violence
- Parent alienating behaviors (PABs) in their various forms
- Specifics of the evaluation process, including identifying "red" and "green" flags to guide next steps
- Best practices for accurate assessment of families with allegations of abuse, alienation, or compromised parenting
- The Stepwise approach for PCCP cases
- Strategies for maximizing success and minimizing risk
- Mitigation of recency and confirmation bias
- Potential for biases across professional roles that can lead to misunderstanding
- Challenges associated with role confusion and court orders that require action beyond the scope of designated role
- Unique challenges faced by judges, attorneys, and clinicians
- Interventions, including possible goals for family members engaged in those interventions
- Challenges that arise when one parent seeks to move quickly in the process and the other seeks to delay
- Best practices when one parent is gatekeeping and the child refuses contact with the other parent
- Determining when to persist and when disengage
- Responding when a family takes an unexpected turn
- Risk management considerations for attorneys and mental health clinicians
- Integration of and reference to the current research, ethics, and more!

"The entire program was amazing, and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart... which is frequently broken by these cases. I learned a tremendous amount, and one of the best things I learned is that I am not alone in just how sad and difficult these cases are."

-Participant feedback from 2025

"Phenomenal training overall. I rate this as one of the best trainings I've EVER taken"

-Participant feedback from 2025

Advanced Training on Parent-Child Contact Problems

Sessions

Module 1: Participants will meet the fictional family and review the complexities of child resistance, including developmental context, forced or mandated therapy, trauma-informed perspectives, and the misalignment of child and parent needs/wants leading to parent child conflict. Faculty will discuss the important review of whose best interests are at the heart of consideration. This module also examines the Stepwise approach to PCCP cases, informed consent, ethics across professional roles, and risk management.

Module 2: Faculty will explore the many lenses through which to view the fictional family and how best to moderate risk and maximize success in professional interventions. The session includes a research review on shared parenting and demonstrates how bias can lead to misunderstanding and polarization. Faculty will introduce key controversies including the impact of “wrong” decisions along the way, and guide participants through structured assessment designed to minimize risk.

Module 3: Faculty will focus on the spectrum of issues encompassed by the term “family violence,” including intimate partner violence, domestic violence, coercive control (CC), and the impact when children are witness to these behaviors. Topics include types of control, child abuse and neglect, and child sexual abuse. Faculty will discuss the continuum from poor to impaired parenting, control to coercive control, and will emphasize that different families require different approaches.

Module 4: Participants will explore high-conflict dynamics, poor or compromised parenting, impaired parenting, and patterns of unwarranted negative messaging by one parent in an attempt to convince a child that the other parent is “bad,” dangerous, disinterested, or not to be trusted. Faculty will examine best practices for understanding predisposing, precipitating, and perpetuating factors in PCCP cases.

Module 5: This session will address possible interventions for families with PCCP dynamics. It will include steps to create and set up an intervention, the development of intervention goals, ethics, and some of the different challenges for success, including strategies for client management, inadmissible evidence, and how to work with other professionals who are not court proficient.

Module 6: Faculty will examine dilemmas faced across disciplines. Attorneys may experience disagreements with clients on case hypotheses or approaches. Judges may struggle to determine appropriate interventions, address stalled interventions or interference, and get buy-in. Therapists may face parents with misaligned agendas, ethical conflicts when court orders do not align with professional standards, or misalignment from other professionals on a case.

Module 7: This session will focus on working through a case, including what to do and when to do it. Faculty will explore the art of apology in parent-child relationships, and interventions for cases involving accusations of parental gatekeeping and a child’s refusal to have contact with one parent.

Module 8: In this wrap-up session, participants will explore what to do when the puzzle pieces don’t fit. A faculty panel will discuss factors that help determine when, and if so how, to persist in the most entrenched cases, and what factors determine a successful intervention. Topics raised by the audience throughout the course will be addressed here including complex and controversial areas such as what to do when the case is not responding to treatment; how, if, and when to change direction when safety, stress, or anxiety manifest; and what to do when the parties can no longer pay you; when you have crossed an ethical boundary; or when one party threatens to file a complaint.

Learning Objectives

Participants in this online training program will be able to:

- Define parent-child contact problems (PCCPs)
- Describe strategies to intervene in an enmeshed parent-child relationship
- List three early factors that suggest a family is appropriate for PCCP interventions
- Describe the risks associated with “concept creep” and the use of imprecise terms to describe PCCPs
- Examine best practices for accurate assessment of families with allegations of abuse, alienation, and compromised parenting
- Examine the Stepwise approach to PCCP cases
- Describe the many areas covered under the term “family violence”
- Discuss the differences among various types of control exerted by PCCP parents
- Identify multiple factors that predispose, precipitate, and perpetuate parent-child contact problems
- Identify parent alienating behaviors (PABs) in their various forms
- Identify the steps needed to set up an intervention
- Determine possible intervention goals for family members who are engaged in a family intervention
- Describe actions to take when a rejected parent wants the intervention to move faster and the favored parent wants to stall
- Explain what to do when a court order requires you to determine parenting time
- Discuss the role of a judge and the unique challenges faced by members of the judiciary in PCCP cases
- Discuss ethical dilemmas unique to different professional roles that present when working with PCCP dynamics
- Utilize a framework for developing and delivering apologies in parent-child relationships
- Analyze best practices to intervene in a PCCP case when allegations of parent-child gatekeeping are present, and a child is refusing contact with one parent
- Discuss the factors that help determine when to persist in a parent-child reconciliation and when to let go
- Describe strategies to employ when a PCCP case shifts in unexpected directions
- Discuss the role of an attorney representing a parent in a case with PCCP dynamics and the unique challenges faced by lawyers
- Discuss the role of an attorney representing a child who is resisting contact with a parent
- Describe strategies for navigating misalignment among different professionals in different roles within the same case
- Identify two factors that determine a successful intervention

Advanced Training on Parent-Child Contact Problems

Schedule

Some locations are not listed below. Please convert to your local time zone.

	Pacific Time US/Canada	Central Time US/Canada	Eastern Time US/Canada	Greenwich Meantime	Australian Eastern Time (Day ahead)
January 12					
Module 1	8am-10am	10am-12pm	11am-1pm	4pm-6pm	3am-5am
Module 2	11am-1pm	1pm-3pm	2pm-4pm	7pm-9pm	6am-8am
January 13					
Module 3	8am-10am	10am-12pm	11am-1pm	4pm-6pm	3am-5am
Module 4	11am-1pm	1pm-3pm	2pm-4pm	7pm-9pm	6am-8am
January 14					
Module 5	8am-10am	10am-12pm	11am-1pm	4pm-6pm	3am-5am
Module 6	11am-1pm	1pm-3pm	2pm-4pm	7pm-9pm	6am-8am
January 15					
Module 7	8am-10am	10am-12pm	11am-1pm	4pm-6pm	3am-5am
Module 8	11am-1pm	1pm-3pm	2pm-4pm	7pm-9pm	6am-8am

Time Zones

While it is not possible to schedule all sessions for daylight hours in all countries, recordings will be made available for purchase after the program has concluded. Please contact AFCC at afcc@afccnet.org for further information. The certificate of attendance will only include time logged while attending the initial live sessions.

NOTE: If you are unable to attend live, stay tuned to the AFCC website for a special offer. Recordings of the training programs will be available at a reduced price for non-registrants following the completion of the program. **Continuing education credit is available only for programs attended live. CE credits are not available for the bonus Primer which is offered as a recording only.**

"Fantastic program. I learned a lot, and I feel emboldened to keep up the good fight. Thank you!"
-Participant feedback from 2025

Training Team



Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP is a Board-certified psychologist in Couple and Family Psychology (ABCFP) and a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA). She developed and was the director of the Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law at William James College where she was a Professor of Clinical Psychology. Previously she was an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School and Director of Training in the Children and the Law Program, Department of Psychology at Massachusetts General Hospital. She has published extensively on issues related to attachment, alienation, co-parenting after divorce, high conflict divorce, parent-child contact problems, parenting plans, and parenting coordination. Dr. Deutsch has served on numerous AFCC and APA task forces. She is also a former President of AFCC.



Leslie M. Drozd, PhD is a psychologist with 36 years of practice in forensic and clinical psychology in California, Washington, and Hawaii. She has conducted parenting plan evaluations in addition to serving as a forensic consultant and as a testifying and didactic expert. Leslie has co-authored professional guidelines for conducting evaluations and co-edited books, chapters, and articles on conducting evaluations, domestic violence, substance misuse, trauma, alienation, gatekeeping, step-up parenting plans, relocation, psychological testing, child sexual abuse, parenting coordination, and family therapy with families with parent-child contact problems. She served on the American Psychological Association's Ethics Committee and on numerous boards of directors including AFCC's.



Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP is the Maconda Brown O'Connor Professor at Smith College School for Social Work. A prolific writer, speaker, and consultant, she has a reputation for the development, implementation, and evaluation of preventive interventions in courts and family-focused community agencies. She specializes in issues pertaining to coparenting, father involvement, life transitions, early development, parental conflict, and family law. She has been a key consultant and evaluator for the Out of Court Divorce program in Denver, CO and the Family Resolutions Specialty Court in Hampshire County, MA. She was awarded AFCC's Stanley Cohen Award for Distinguished Research and the Meyer Elkin Essay Award for the 2023 article PCCP through the eyes of professionals in the *Family Court Review* where she serves as the Social Science editor. She is also a former President of AFCC.



Hon. Harvey A. Silberman (Ret.) recently left the family law bench in California after 20 years and is now doing private trials and mediations with Signature Resolutions. While on the bench, Judge Silberman was honored as Judge of the Year by the American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers, Pasadena Bar Association, San Fernando Valley Bar Association and the Los Angeles Inn of Court Family Law Section. Judge Silberman has served on the board of the AFCC California Chapter and spoken at numerous local and international conferences.

"Thank you for this very informative training.

Thank you to the whole training team for sharing their expertise and tireless work to better how we serve our complicated clientele."

-Participant feedback from 2025

Training Team



Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD has been in private practice in California, specializing in family dispute resolution and clinical work in the family courts for over 30 years. He is a pioneer in the development of the parenting coordination role internationally and regularly presents at conferences and trains family justice professionals about parent-child contact problems in shared parenting arrangements. He was a recipient of the AFCC's president's award in 2023 and the Myer Elkin essay award for the article judged best in the 2024 volume of the *Family Court Review* where he currently serves on the editorial board. He served on the APA Ethics Committee from 2016-2018. Dr. Sullivan is the co-founder of Overcoming Barriers, Inc. He is also a former President of AFCC.



Louise T. Truax, JD is an attorney in private practice in Connecticut, with a focus on high conflict custody cases. She is a Fellow in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and was received the prestigious Fellow of the Year Award in 2014. She is the general editor and author of *Connecticut Family Law*, a LexisNexis publication. She frequently lectures in Connecticut and throughout the country on family law issues, particularly custody issues.



Peggie A. Ward, PhD is a clinical-forensic psychologist who has specialized in the areas of child abuse, alcohol abuse, and parent child contact problems for 35 years. Her independent practice focuses on complex parent child and family interactions where family conflict is a dominant factor. Dr. Ward has held appointments at Tufts Medical School and Harvard Medical School. She has served on the AFCC MA Board of Directors and FLAFCC Board of Directors where she is currently Vice President. She has published articles on parental alienation. She contributed several chapters to the edited book, *Overcoming Parent Child Contact Problems: Family-based Interventions for Resistance, Rejection, and Alienation* (2015). Dr. Ward has created courses for William James College on Interventions for Parent Child Contact Problems.

*"This was a very excellent program. **The speakers were very knowledgeable and compassionate.**"*
-Participant feedback from 2025

Not an AFCC Member, Yet?

Become an AFCC member for just \$160 when you register for this event and unlock the exclusive member rate! Allowing you to become an AFCC for essentially free! Plus, as a member, you'll enjoy even more savings on future AFCC events and access to valuable resources.

Select "Join AFCC" on the registration form. Your AFCC membership will instantly pay for itself.

General Information

What's Included?

The registration fee includes live attendance to the program, access to the program materials including recordings and handouts from the presentation, and a certificate of attendance. **Each attendee's certificate will reflect the hours viewed live only.**

Note: If you are unable to attend live, recordings of the training programs will be available at a reduced price following the completion of the training program. Continuing education credit is available only for programs attended live.

Primer

The primer is a 3-hour recorded training focused on the basics of PCCP. It provides a substantive foundation regarding PCCP dynamics, various causes and influences, and the manner in which multiple influences can become intertwined to create a complex presentation. The primer will include an overview of interventions and identify some of the common challenges professionals face. The primer is available as a recording only and is not eligible for CE credits. The training team is finalizing the primer. AFCC will post it on the training portal and notify registrants by email when it is available.

What Equipment Do I Need?

AFCC recommends using a desktop or laptop computer to take full advantage of Zoom's capabilities. This will provide a better viewing experience and will permit access to features not available on the Zoom app on tablets and smart phones. A stable internet connection is imperative for the best viewing experience. If you experience internet issues, you may join by phone using the dial-in number provided in the confirmation email from Zoom and follow along using the materials that are available in advance of each program.

If you use a Zoom account that is registered in someone else's name, your attendance will not be recorded and AFCC will not be able to issue you a certificate of attendance. To ensure you receive proper credit, use a Zoom account associated with the same email address used in your AFCC profile. You can sign up for a free Zoom account at zoom.us/signup.

Continuing Education Credits

Beyond the Basics: Advanced Training on Parent-Child Contact Problems is eligible for up to 16-hours of continuing education for psychologists. AFCC is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. AFCC is recognized by the New York Education Department's State Board for Psychology as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychologists #PSY-0190. AFCC maintains responsibility for the program and its content. AFCC will make an application for continuing education credits for social workers through the National Association of Social Workers. AFCC will apply for continuing education credits for parenting coordinators in Massachusetts. AFCC will also make applications for CLE to Minnesota and Vermont and reserves the right to modify the list during the registration period. A certificate of attendance will be provided to all attendees. Attendees may use the AFCC Certificate of Attendance to verify attendance and apply for continuing education in their jurisdiction. Each attendee's certificate will reflect the training hours viewed live only. Other professionals may opt to apply for continuing education credits in their discipline in their jurisdiction by providing their Certificate of Attendance, the brochure, and any training materials directly to their accrediting body. Attorneys may apply for CLE in their jurisdiction on their own, but AFCC cannot guarantee that credit will be awarded.

AFCC strives to offer a wide range of training highlighting different research, advocacy positions, policies, practices, programs, and ideas. Some aspects of this training may be evidence-based, while other aspects may report on innovations still in development, emerging practices, or policy initiatives. The goal of this training is to enhance learning while encouraging respectful inquiry, discussion, and debate consistent with AFCC organizational values. AFCC does not necessarily endorse or support the opinions of the presenters and recognizes there may be differing opinions and/or alternative interventions that are not addressed in this specific program.

Cancellation Policy

Transfer of registration to another person may be made once, at any time without a fee. All requests for refunds must be made in writing. Written notice of cancellation received by email or postmarked by January 2, 2026, will be issued a full refund minus a \$100 USD service fee. No refunds or credits will be issued for cancellations received after January 2, 2026. AFCC reserves the right to make changes to the program, including (but not limited to) changes to the content and speakers in the published event schedule, or canceling sessions, should unforeseen circumstances arise.

More Information

For program and registration inquiries, contact AFCC at afcc@afccnet.org or 608-664-3750.

Registration

Become an AFCC member for just \$160 when you register for this event and unlock the exclusive member rate! Allowing you to become an AFCC for essentially free! Plus, as a member, you'll enjoy even more savings on future AFCC events and access to valuable resources.

Select "Join AFCC" below. Your AFCC membership will instantly pay for itself.

Register online at afccnet.org or return this completed form with payment.

Please type or print clearly.

(Dr./Mr./Ms./Judge) First Name _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____ Degree _____

Title _____ Organization _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please circle appropriate amount(s) below and total at the bottom

Join AFCC* for 12 months and register at
AFCC member rates!

\$160

Advanced Training:
Parent-Child Contact Problems
January 12-15, 2026

AFCC Member

Non-Member

\$375

\$550

Total:

\$____

\$____

*AFCC membership includes an electronic subscription to the AFCC quarterly academic journal, *Family Court Review*, with full access to the archives. Membership also includes a subscription to the eNEWS, reduced registration rates for conferences, webinars, and training programs, access to the Member Center featuring archived webinars, and the searchable Member Directory. More information at afccnet.org.

Payment

Registrations must be paid in full prior to attendance.

Check for \$ _____ is enclosed (US currency only, please.)

Charge \$ _____ to my Visa / MasterCard / American Express / Discover credit card.

(Transactions will be processed in US dollars; exchange rate on day of transaction will apply)

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____ / _____ Security Code _____ Postal Code _____

Name on Card _____

Cardholder's Signature _____

**Register online at afccnet.org
or return the completed form and payment to:**

AFCC

6525 Grand Teton Plaza
Madison, WI 53719
Phone: 608 -664-3750
Fax: 608-664-3751
afcc@afccnet.org