



AFCC Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

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

Newly expanded for 2027, with enriched content for mental health professionals and added focus for lawyers, judges, and other family law roles.

Bonus: Three-hour recorded primer is available to help participants build a strong foundation for this elevated, advanced training.

January 11-14, 2027



Training Team

Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP
Leslie M. Drozd, PhD
Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP
Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD
Hon. Diana Tennis (Ret.)
Louise T. Truax, JD
Hon. Herman Walker, Jr.
Peggie A. Ward, PhD



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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

Revitalized for 2027 with revised case material, updated research, two new judicial faculty members, and faculty discussion woven into every module.

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

January 11-14, 2027

AFCC's advanced training on parent-child contact problems returns for 2027 with significant updates. The fictional family case presents with scenarios that reflect the competing allegations, regression, and non-compliance professionals encounter in practice. The faculty has updated the research throughout the program. Two judges join the team to bring a strong judicial perspective to every stage of a case. In each module, judges, attorneys, and mental health professionals discuss the case from their role-perspectives, so participants see where those views align and where they conflict. The program takes 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 to 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!

What's New for 2027

- **Revised modules.** Module 2 incorporates the latest research. Module 3 includes new material from AFCC's 2026 Safety First Training. Modules 5 and 6 add judicial contributions and fresh dilemmas.
- **Expanded case scenarios.** Drawing on faculty observations, Module 7 adds new developments to the family's story and works through variations involving competing allegations, regression, and non-compliance.
- **Faculty discussion in every module.** Faculty from different disciplines discuss each segment of the case the perspective of professional roles.
- **A redesigned closing session.** Module 8 is now a moderated roundtable built around questions attendees have raised.
- **Updated learning objectives** focused on practical application, including client expectations, compliance mechanisms, and managing cases with limited resources.
- **Additional judicial participation.**

Attending again? Returning participants get new scenarios, new judicial perspectives, and a redesigned final session. **First time attending?** The three-hour recorded primer gives you the background you need to get the most out of the live sessions.

Advanced Training on Parent-Child Contact Problems

Sessions

Module 1: Controversies, Conundrums, and Misaligned Goals: PCCP in Many Forms

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—and the critical importance of setting expectations and defining success early on.

Module 2: Multiple Views through Multiple Lenses: Maximize Success/Minimize Risk

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: Family Violence

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: Parenting and Coparenting Difficulties

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: Attorneys, Therapists, and Judges as First Responders: Timing and Expectations

This session will address how attorneys can establish appropriate expectations for clients. The panelists will also identify behaviors that demonstrate a parent is ready for parent child contact problem family therapy. They will examine the importance of implementation and identify mechanisms by which a parent can be held accountable for compliance with a court order or a therapy service agreement.

Module 6: Dilemmas: Pathways and Pitfalls

Faculty will examine dilemmas faced across disciplines and roles in PCCP cases. 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: Working Through a Case: What to Do and When to Do It

This session will focus on working through cases, including what to do and when to do it. Faculty will explore specific scenarios, with unique variations, to highlight the challenges that arise from competing allegations. They will discuss case management and tailored interventions to address regression, non-compliance, and behaviors that are sometimes difficult to manage.

Module 8: Wrapping It Up: Practical Solutions to the Most Vexing Conundrums

All-new closing session roundtable. A moderator will lead faculty panelists offering judicial, legal, and mental health perspectives in a discussion of complex issues raised by participants in the last two iterations of this training.

Learning Objectives

Participants in this online training program will be able to:

- Discuss factors in PCCP cases that are likely to lead to more successful outcomes.
- Discuss the role of attorney, therapist, and parents’ expectations in the outcome of PCCP cases.
- Describe the risks associated with “concept creep” and using imprecise terms to describe PCCP.
- List three ways to mitigate recency and/or confirmation bias in PCCP cases.
- Describe the various behaviors and dynamics that fit under the umbrella term “family violence.”
- Discuss the differences among various types of control potentially seen in PCCP cases.
- Identify three of the multiple factors that predispose, precipitate, and perpetuate parent-child contact problems.
- Identify five Parent Alienating Behaviors (PABs).
- Identify one mechanism by which a parent can be held accountable for compliance with a court order, or a therapy service agreement.
- Identify how attorneys can best establish expectations for clients.
- Identify three behaviors that demonstrate a parent is ready for parent child contact problem family therapy.
- Distinguish attorney’s duties as a legal advocate from their duties as a counselor advising on client interest.
- Apply specific strategies to common dilemmas that arise when interventions encounter resistance.
- Describe actions to take when children want their voices heard by the court, but it may be contraindicated.
- Analyze best practices to intervene in a PCCP case where there are allegations of parent-child gatekeeping and the child is refusing contact with one parent.
- Describe three ways to manage cases with limited resources.
- Discuss challenges when facing difficult personalities.

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 Mean Time	Australian Eastern Time (Day ahead)
January 11					
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 12					
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 13					
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 14					
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.**

"It was awesome! I loved the family case study followed through the entire class. Loved the different professional perspectives!"

-Participant feedback from 2026

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 over 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. Dr. Drozd 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.



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 Meyer 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.

"This was one of the most organized, well put together programs I have attended in the 30+ years I have gone to continuing education sessions. Thank you!"

-Participant feedback from 2026

Training Team



Hon. Diana Tennis (Ret.) is a retired Florida Circuit Judge and Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator. During her 11 years on the family bench, she served as Administrative Judge, President of the Central Florida Family Law Inn, and co-chair of the statewide Parenting Coordinator Task Force. She currently serves on the Board of the Florida Chapter of the AFCC and has a central Florida mediation and consultation practice.



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 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.



Hon. Herman Walker, Jr. is a Superior Court Judge in the Third Judicial District of the State of Alaska. Prior to being appointed Superior Court Judge, Judge Walker was the managing partner in Limón & Walker. In private practice Judge Walker focused on complex trial litigation. He represented people in complex family law cases, which included business valuation and custody. He also represented corporations and people in personal injury cases. He is the past president of the Alaska Association for Justice and a founding member of Alaska Association for Criminal Defense Lawyers. He was a faculty member of the Trial Lawyers College for six years and still teaches at the University of Wyoming Trial Institute. Judge Walker was appointed by the State Supreme Court Justice to the Alaska State Legislative Ethics Committee, where he served as Chair until his appointment to the bench. Judge Walker is a Judicial Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers.



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 more than 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 an excellent training! I plan to attend this annually and recommend my colleagues in this field to attend as well."

-Participant feedback from 2026

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 Member 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 following the completion of the training programs. Continuing education credit is currently 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 primer is available online as a bonus for all training registrants.

What Equipment Do I Need?

AFCC recommends using a desktop or laptop computer to take full advantage of Zoom's capabilities. 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.

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.



Association of Family and Conciliation Courts has been approved by National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 8118. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. Association of Family and Conciliation Courts is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.

AFCC will make an application for continuing education credits for social workers through the National Association of Social Workers.

AFCC will make applications for CLE to Minnesota and Vermont and reserves the right to modify the list of applications during the registration period. Attorneys in other jurisdictions may use their certificate of attendance to verify participation and apply for CLE credit but are responsible for confirming eligibility in their specific jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions accept credits awarded by reciprocal jurisdictions for a more direct track for approval. 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.

AFCC will apply for continuing education credits for parenting coordinators in Massachusetts.

Limitations

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.

Content Access and Code of Conduct Policies

These live presentations, recordings, and associated materials are licensed for your personal, non-transferable use only. Downloading, copying, sharing, text/data mining, or using any portion for AI training or prompts is prohibited. By registering for, attending, or accessing any AFCC content, you agree to the [Content Access Terms](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).

Cancellation Policy

Registration may be transferred once without a fee. Cancellations must be submitted by fax, email (sent and confirmed), or mail. Notice received by or postmarked by January 4, 2027, receive a refund less a \$100 USD service fee. No refunds or credits after January 4, 2027. If your cancellation is not confirmed within two business days, contact AFCC at 608-664-3750. AFCC reserves the right to change the program, including but not limited to content, speakers, schedule, or 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 member 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.

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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 11-14, 2027

AFCC Member

Non-Member

\$385

\$560

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:

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