



AFCC eNEWS

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER
VOL. 3 NO. 6
SEPTEMBER 2008

New Orleans Call for Presenters Deadline: October 6

The deadline for proposals for AFCC's 46th Annual Conference is October 6, 2008. The conference theme is *Children, Courts and Custody: Back to the Future or Full Steam Ahead?* and will take place May 27-30, 2009 in the heart of the Big Easy at the Sheraton New Orleans. If you are interested in participating as a presenter, please submit a proposal prior to the deadline.

[Call for Presenters \(PDF\)...](#)

Parenting Coordination Training in Kansas City

AFCC is hosting *Parenting Coordination: Intensive Interventions for High Conflict Shared Parenting*, October 23-24, 2008 at the University of Missouri at Kansas City School of Law. The two-day training will be presented by Matthew J. Sullivan, Ph.D. and is eligible for 13 hours of continuing education credit for psychologists. Continuing education approval from the NASW and CLE credit in Missouri is pending. A detailed description of the training, including the registration form and hotel information, can be found in the training brochure by clicking the link below.

[View training brochure \(PDF\)...](#)

More than 375 Participants are Registered for Albuquerque Symposium and Congress: Are you?

Time is running out to register for AFCC's Symposium and Congress! AFCC's *Eighth International Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations*, September 25-27, 2008 and *Eighth International Congress on Parent Education and Access Programs*, September 26-27, 2008 will take place next week in Albuquerque, New Mexico. More than 375 professionals from nearly 50 states and provinces are registered to join AFCC for these exciting conferences. Click the link below for more information or to register today.

[Register now...](#)

ASK THE EXPERTS

Ten Ethical Considerations for Parenting Coordinators

by Linda Fieldstone, M.Ed. and Nina Zollo, Esq.

The parenting coordinator's (PC) ability and commitment to act ethically is a fundamental part of the parenting coordination process and is a vital aspect of the quality of the service offered.



CALL FOR PRESENTERS

46th Annual Conference
*Children, Courts and Custody:
Back to the Future or Full
Steam Ahead?*

May 27-30, 2009

Sheraton New Orleans

New Orleans, Louisiana

[Call for Presenters \(PDF\)](#)

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

AFCC Eighth International Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

September 25-27, 2008

Albuquerque Marriott

Albuquerque, New Mexico

AFCC Eighth International Congress on Parent Education and Access Programs

September 26-27, 2008

Albuquerque Marriott

Albuquerque, New Mexico

[Conference Brochure \(PDF\)](#)

The PC's ethical behavior preserves the integrity of the parenting coordination process, provides protection for each participant and helps maintain the sanity of the PC in dealing with these high conflict cases. AFCC members Linda Fieldstone and Nina Zollo offer their ten ethical considerations for parenting coordinators.

[Read now...](#)

Update from AFCC's Resource Development Committee

AFCC's Resource Development Committee would like to thank AFCC members for their generous donations in response to this year's record-breaking Annual Appeal. Nearly \$26,000 was raised to support AFCC's scholarship and outreach programs. Thanks to this support, AFCC was able to award a record 30 scholarships and create an outreach project to advance the initiatives of the AFCC and NCJFCJ Domestic Violence and Family Courts Project. Look for the scholarship application for AFCC's 46th Annual Conference, May 27-30, 2009 in New Orleans in January. For more information on the initiatives of the Resource Development Committee in the last year, please click the link below.

[Resource Development Committee Update \(PDF\)...](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

How does the Justice System Treat Victims of Domestic Violence

Address by Hon. Peter Boshier, Principal Family Court Judge, Wellington, New Zealand at a local non-violence conference, A Platform for Change: A Continuum of Family Violence, August 21, 2008 in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand

Family violence is one of the most serious problems facing New Zealand. In the calendar year 2006, New Zealand police recorded 38,369 family violence related incidents and 32,675 family violence related offences, making up a total of 71,044 family violence related occurrences. In the same year 16 of the 49 murders were recorded as domestic violence related. The continuing prevalence of domestic violence evident in New Zealand has seen the situation described as an epidemic in this country; and horrifying statistics now predict one in four women and just under one in five men will be the victim of domestic violence at some point in their lifetime.

[Continue reading speech \(PDF\)...](#)

Chiefs Seek Unified Family Court: Bentley Awaits Federal Government Action

by Robert Todd, courtesy of the Law Times, Ontario, Canada

Ontario's judiciary last week celebrated the start of a new year with pomp and circumstance - but the new-look *Opening of the Courts* ceremony also served as a forum for two chief justices to sound off on the province's struggling family court system. Chief Justice of Ontario Warren Winkler said governments need to funnel more money to the system, as judges can only do so much on their own. "Family law matters which are now understood to be complex, social problems that require multidisciplinary and coordinated responses, must attract the

AFCC Trainings

[Training Brochure \(PDF\)](#)

Parenting Coordination

Matthew Sullivan, Ph.D.

October 23-24, 2008
Kansas City, Missouri

Parenting Coordination

Christine Coates, J.D.

December 8-9, 2008
Baltimore, Maryland

Father Parent Differently Than Mothers

Marsha Kline Pruett, Ph.D.

December 10-11, 2008
Baltimore, Maryland

Parenting Coordination

Robin M. Deutsch, Ph.D.

February 9-10, 2009
New Orleans, Louisiana

Attachment, Alienation and Access

Arnold Shienvold, Ph.D.

February 11-12, 2009
New Orleans, Louisiana

AFCC Chapters

Texas Chapter Annual Conference

October 3-4, 2008
South Texas College of Law
Houston, Texas
www.texasafcc.org

New York Chapter Annual Conference

November 7, 2008
Association of the Bar of the City of New York
New York, New York
www.afccny.org

Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

January 30-February 1, 2009
Hilton Sedona Resort and Spa
Sedona, Arizona
www.azafcc.org

California Chapter Annual Conference

February 6-8, 2009
The Mark Hopkins Hotel

resources they require," said Winkler in calling for the creation of a "properly serviced, unified family court system that meets the needs of Ontarians."

[Read more...](#)

RESEARCH UPDATE

Long Term Effects of Physical Abuse on Children Studied

Courtesy of J.M. Craig Press, Inc.

Much has been written regarding the long term effects of physical abuse on children and some research regarding outcomes has emerged in recent years. This study examines the issue in far more detail than we have seen before.

[Read more...](#)

FEATURED ARTICLE

Five Characteristics of Successful Family Law Practitioners

by Elizabeth Ferris, courtesy of Mediate.com

Why are some practitioners successfully building their family law practice while other practitioners struggle to attract desirable clients and are frequently concerned about, "where the next case will come from?" I have been coaching and working with family lawyers, mediators and collaborative practitioners across North America and Europe for the past 8 years and have observed the characteristics of highly successful practitioners. Here are the five characteristics that I've found that work for practitioners who have succeeded in building a family law practice.

[Read more...](#)

FEATURED NEWSLETTER AND MEDIA

Court ADR Connection

Courtesy of Resolution Systems Institute

Resolution Systems Institute (RSI) recently launched an e-newsletter, *Court ADR Connection*, that delivers court ADR news and events from around the country. The monthly e-newsletter covers new court-related ADR programs, court rules, statutes, case law and academic research, and updates on RSI projects and publications. For more information, including subscription information, please click the link below.

[More information \(PDF\)...](#)

ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project Final Report Online

Courtesy of the ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project

The ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project concluded in August 2008 after more than seven years of work. The Project's Advisory Committee included AFCC President Robin Deutsch and AFCC members Donna Beavers, John Crouch, Linda Elrod, Katherine Holliday, Joy Ashton Lyngar, Hon. Denise McColley and Janet Ward. Many of the resources the Project

San Francisco, California
www.afcc-ca.org

Florida Chapter Annual Conference

February 27-28, 2009
Renaissance Hotel
Tampa, Florida
www.afccnet.org

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ABOUT AFCC eNEWS

AFCC eNEWS is a monthly e-newsletter published by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC). *AFCC eNEWS* provides professionals with time sensitive and up-to-date topics including practice tips, research innovations and international news.

[AFCC eNEWS archive...](#)

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developed including, *A Judge's Guide: Making Child-Centered Decision in Custody Cases, Second Edition*, is available in PDF format on the Project's Web site and can be accessed by [clicking here](#). The 64-page final report of the Project, *Enhancing the Representation of Children in Private Custody Cases: Resources and Lessons Learned from the ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project*, can be accessed by clicking the link below.
[Read the report \(PDF\)...](#)



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Long Term Effects of Physical Abuse on Children Studied

Courtesy of J.M. Craig Press, Inc.

Lansford, J. E., Miller-Johnson, S., Berlin, L. J., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E. and Pettit, G. S. [2007]. Early Physical Abuse and Later Violent Delinquency: A Prospective Longitudinal Study. Child Maltreatment, 12, 233-245.

Much has been written regarding the long term effects of physical abuse on children and some research regarding outcomes has emerged in recent years [See Digests: 3, 4; 4, 2; 5, 2 & 4; and 7, 6]. This study examines the issue in far more detail than we have seen before.

The authors performed a longitudinal study. They first interviewed mothers of children who were five years old and asked if the children had been mistreated. The children were then followed every year until they were 21. The authors studied 574 children; 81% were European Americans and 17% were African Americans.

They found that:

- Adolescents who were physically abused during the first five years of life were more likely to have; been arrested as a juvenile, perpetrated romantic relationship violence, acted out, been fired from a job, and become a teen parent. These teens were also less likely to graduate from high school.
- When compared to abused European American teens, the abused African Americans were more likely to have; committed documented violent and non-violent offenses, not graduated from high school and become a teen parent.
- Among African Americans, those who were abused as children, when compared to those not abused were; twice as likely to have court records for violent offenses, three times more likely to have non violent offenses, four times more likely to have been a teen parent and almost four times less likely to have graduated from high school.
- Regardless of race, girls who had been abused were three times more likely to have been fired and to have become a teen parent.
- The authors concluded that "early physical abuse led not only to later violent delinquency but also to a more global of pattern of violent and non violent dysfunction [p. 242]."

Critical Analysis

This study is very well done. Not only does it have a large number of participants but African Americans are well represented. They followed the children for a very long time and did so frequently. The authors were able to keep a very high percentage of participants in the study despite the length of time over which it was conducted. Finally, the authors examined a far more specific set of outcomes than we have seen before. In terms of limitations, only mothers were interviewed, and there was no independent

corroboration of the abuse. A second limitation is that no data were reported regarding the relationship between the amount of abuse and the severity of the teen's problems.

Recommendations

This study tells us a great deal about the long-term outcomes of abuse and the needs of children who may have been mistreated prior to their parents divorce or termination of their rights. Furthermore, it shows just how serious the consequences of abuse really are. On the other hand, the authors do not say anything regarding the relationship between severity of abuse the children suffered and the degree of problems that resulted. While such an assumption is reasonable, the science is not there yet. Nevertheless, this is not a situation that requires waiting. When there is evidence that children have been abused, they should be evaluated for treatment regardless of the degree of mistreatment they may have suffered. The sooner treatment/intervention can begin, the better.

Parents are not always aware of their teen's problematic behavior. Therefore, consulting others who have independent knowledge of the teen's behavior can shed great light on the seriousness of his or her condition.

For this as well as other valuable research visit J.M. Craig Press online at www.jmcraig.com or call (877) 960-1474. AFCC members receive a 25% discount on all J.M. Craig Products.

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ASK THE EXPERTS

Ten Ethical Considerations for Parenting Coordinators

by Linda Fieldstone, M.Ed., Miami, Florida and Nina Zollo, Esq., Tallahassee, Florida

The parenting coordinator's (PC) ability and commitment to act ethically is a fundamental part of the parenting coordination process and is a vital aspect of the quality of the service offered. The PC's ethical behavior preserves the integrity of the parenting coordination process, provides protection for each participant and helps maintain the sanity of the PC in dealing with these high conflict cases. AFCC members Linda Fieldstone and Nina Zollo offer their ten ethical considerations for parenting coordinators.

1. Know Your Limitations

Decline the appointment or refer the case back to the court for the appointment of a new PC, if there are issues such as domestic violence or abuse, mental illness or substance abuse, or any other issues in which you are not specifically trained to address in the parenting coordination process.

2. Screening is a Process, Not an Event

Screening for domestic violence, mental health and substance abuse should occur throughout the parenting coordination process. You may be the first person to recognize that such issues are impacting the family.

3. Know the Law

Stay current with and adhere to all statutes, rules, administrative orders, regulations and procedures in your state or jurisdiction.

4. Know the Legal History of the Family

Be familiar with all orders, pleadings and other court documents relating to the parents, the children, and any extended family, if relevant.

5. Educate Your Clients on the PC Process (or Let Your Clients Know What They Are Getting Into)

Provide an oral and written explanation of the parenting coordination process to the parents during your first meeting so that they are aware of the scope of your authority, what the PC does and does NOT do, and any limits on the confidentiality of the process.

6. Explain Your Fee Structure

Explain the basis of all of your fees, how and when each parent incurs charges, including time spent to read information provided by the parents or obtain information from their court files, responses to emails, fax and telephonic communications between meetings, and any additional charges for depositions and testimony.

7. No Dual Roles and Learn to Say NO!

Refrain from acting in any role not directly related to the parenting coordination process, such as acting as attorney, therapist, financial advisor, custody evaluator, mediator, advocate, supervised visitation observer, investigator or JUDGE. Educate the court on the role of the PC by declining to perform tasks that are beyond the scope of your duties, or are unethical according to any other professional standards to which you must adhere. (The [AFCC Guidelines for Parenting Coordinators](#) may be a helpful

resource to provide the court when there is a general question of propriety).

8. You are Not an Enforcer

Since you are NOT the judge, and parents have due process rights, you cannot impose penalties if the parents do not adhere to your recommendations, court ordered authority, or payment plan.

9. You are Not a Miracle Worker

No matter how skilled you are as a PC, there are cases where parenting coordination should not occur (we have all had them!), or should be terminated and referred back to the court.

10. You Can't Learn Too Much

Continued training is the key to enhance your knowledge base and helps you to enhance the knowledge base of other PCs in your community. To make it easier for you, AFCC offers trainings for PCs at conferences and other venues periodically throughout the year! For PC training information [click here](#).

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