



AFCC eNEWS

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER
VOL. 6 NO. 11
NOVEMBER 2011

AFCC 49th Annual Conference

Attachment, Brain Science and Children of Divorce: The ABCD's of Child Development for Family Law
June 6–9, 2012
Hyatt Regency Chicago

AFCC Announces Confirmed Sponsors

AFCC is thrilled to announce **Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP** will sponsor **The Second City Improv All Stars** for the AFCC 49th Annual Conference in Chicago! Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP of Chicago is the largest law firm in the country focusing exclusively on family law and is internationally recognized as a model for firms in that field. The Chicago conference will open with a reception followed by a performance by **The Second City Improv All Stars**. If The Second City sounds familiar, it's because some of the biggest names in comedy got their start at The Second City in Chicago. Famous alums include: Tina Fey, John Belushi, Bill Murray, Joan Rivers, Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell and far too many more to list! Thanks to Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP for their sponsorship, which will provide a fun and entertaining start to this conference. Be sure to plan your travel accordingly, you won't want to miss the Welcome Reception and an evening of improvisational comedy, Wednesday, June 6 beginning at 6pm.

Special thanks to the **Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML)**, the **Platinum Sponsor**; The Our Family Wizard website and Complete Equity Markets, Inc., Gold Sponsors; National Cooperative Parenting Center, Silver Sponsor; and Hon. Karen G. Shields (Ret.), Loyola University Chicago Civitas ChildLaw Center, Resolution Systems Institute (RSI), Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR) and Collaborative Law Institute of Illinois (CLII), Local Sponsors.

Sponsorship Opportunities Remain

There are still opportunities to support AFCC and have your organization's name associated with this conference. Sponsorships at the Gold, Silver and Local levels are available. For more details on the benefits of each please see the [Exhibits and Advertising page](#) on the AFCC website or contact AFCC Program Coordinator [Erin Sommerfeld](#) or (608) 664-3750.

Conference Program Coming Soon

The conference program is being finalized now and will be available in electronic format on the AFCC website by the end of the year. The AFCC 49th Annual Conference offers over 80 sessions, some of which will take an in-depth look at attachment

UPCOMING CONFERENCES



AFCC 49th Annual Conference

Attachment, Brain Science and Children of Divorce: The ABCD's of Child Development for Family Law
June 6–9, 2012
Hyatt Regency Chicago
Chicago, Illinois
[More information](#)

AFCC 10th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

November 1–3, 2012
Arizona Grand Resort
Phoenix, Arizona

AFCC 50th Annual Conference

May 29–June 1, 2013
J.W. Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. Live
Los Angeles, California

and neuroscience perspectives as they relate to family law, featuring many of the world's leading experts on attachment. Conference themes are discussed in the July 2011 special issue of *Family Court Review*.

Conference Scholarships

Chicago conference scholarships include registration to the annual conference, one full-day pre-conference institute, a certificate of attendance and admittance to all conference food, beverage and networking functions. This year, in response to concerns regarding the cost of travel and lodging, a record eleven scholarships will include a travel stipend. The online scholarship application will be available in January 2012.

Personality-Disordered Parents and Children who Resist Parental Contact Training Programs from AFCC and CFCC

AFCC and the University of Baltimore School of Law's Center for Families, Children and the Courts are offering two two-day training programs dealing with some of the most difficult issues that family law professionals face. Both programs will be held at the University of Baltimore School of Law. Receive a reduced registration rate when you register for both trainings.

[Read more](#)
[Training brochure](#)

Ask the Experts

Ten Tips for the Holidays

By Robin Deutsch, PhD, Wellesley, Massachusetts

Dr. Deutsch, a former president of AFCC, is a psychologist in Boston. She is the director of the Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School. She is the co-author of *7 Things Your Teenager Won't Tell You: and How to Talk About Them Anyway*, in its second edition (Ballantine).

[Read Dr. Deutsch's tips for getting through the holidays with less stress](#)

AFCC Conference in Indianapolis a Success

The AFCC Regional Training Conference in Indianapolis was a great success! Just shy of 300 attendees came together at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Indianapolis the last weekend of October. The conference was co-sponsored by the Indiana Supreme Court and Indiana Judicial Center. Attendees enjoyed a reception sponsored by the Indiana Judicial Center. AFCC extends a special thank you to Anne Jordan, who served as a liaison between the Indiana Judicial Center and AFCC; Chris Jones, the lead conference shepherd (volunteer); and conference shepherds: Michael P. Commons, Lucille Jardine, Tami Hickman, Loretta Oleksy, Keirsten Roath, Donna Sipe and Amanda Wishin.

Leadership Institute

AFCC held its second leadership institute for current and incoming chapter leaders in Indianapolis, during the AFCC Regional Training Conference on October 27, 2011. Facilitated by

AFCC 51st Annual Conference

May 28–31, 2014
The Westin Harbour Castle
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

AFCC TRAININGS

Managing Personality-Disordered Parents

William A. Eddy, MSA, JD
December 5–6, 2011
Baltimore, Maryland
[More information](#)

Children and Divorce: The Voice of the Child and Interventions When Children Resist Parental Contact

Barbara Jo Fidler, PhD, AccFM

December 7–8, 2011
Baltimore, Maryland
[More information](#)

AFCC CHAPTER CONFERENCES

Louisiana Chapter Conference

January 27, 2012
LSU Law Center
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
[More information](#)

Arizona Chapter Conference

February 3–5, 2012
Hilton Sedona Resort and Spa
Sedona, Arizona
[More information](#)

California Chapter Conference

The New Frontier: Exploring the Challenges and Possibilities of the Changed Landscape for Children and

Leslye Hunter, AFCC Associate Director, the full-day Institute, following a social gathering the previous evening, was attended by chapter leaders: Barbara Atwood and Michael Aaron, Arizona; Kate McNamara, Colorado; Leslie Todd and Pam Baker, Louisiana; Lesley Goldsmith, Massachusetts; Beth Harrington, Minnesota; Rachael Kennedy and Dawn Kuhlman, Missouri; Barbara Worth and Ann Ordway, New Jersey; Andrea Phoenix and Karen Rosenthal, New York; Barbara Fidler and Dena Moyal, Ontario; and Janet Denton and Deborah Cashen, Texas. The mutual support and enthusiasm that arose between the chapters was extremely gratifying and communication between the leaders continues after the Institute.

The AFCC Leadership Institute is offered on a biannual basis as part of the parent organization's support to AFCC Chapters, and provides education on leadership skills and styles, participation in and working with a non-profit board of directors, as well as chapter-specific issues.

AFCC Chapter News

Three new chapters are in the works:

Illinois has filed its letter of intent to become a chapter. If you are a family law professional in Illinois and would like to be part of the formation of the new AFCC Illinois Chapter, just in time for the upcoming AFCC Annual Conference in Chicago, please contact [Mary Gardner](#) or [Nanette McCarthy](#), the chair and vice-chair of the Illinois coordinating committee.

Indiana professionals turned out for a meeting on how to start an AFCC Chapter at the AFCC Regional Training Conference in Indianapolis last month. Over thirty attendees from Indiana spontaneously decided to form a coordinating committee for an AFCC Indiana Chapter. If you are a family law professional in Indiana and would like to join this effort, please contact [Rebecca Billick](#) who is surveying and collecting the names of those who are interested.

Wisconsin has formed a coordinating committee and held its launch event, co-sponsored by the State Bar of Wisconsin, Family Law Section on October 21, 2011. Approximately 120 people attended the event! If you are a family law professional in Wisconsin and are interested in becoming part of this chapter's formation, please contact co-chairs of the Wisconsin coordinating committee [Judge Michael J. Dwyer](#), or Family Court Commissioner [Dolores A. Bomrad](#).

AFCC Member News

AFCC Members **Ken Altshuler**, **Christine Coates**, **Maria Cognetti**, **patti cross** and **Perri E. Mayes** are achieving great honors.

[Read the latest news](#)

Donate to the Scholarship Fund

AFCC members recently received a letter requesting a donation to support the AFCC Scholarship Fund; please consider a contribution to this beneficial program. The AFCC Scholarship Fund provides scholarships to professionals and students who would otherwise not be able to attend AFCC conferences. The

the Courts

February 10–12, 2012
Sheraton Delfina Hotel
Santa Monica, California

[More information](#)

Florida Chapter Conference

Spirit of Cooperation
March 30–31, 2012
Renaissance Tampa
International Plaza
Tampa, Florida

[More information](#)

ASK THE EXPERTS

Do you have a question that you would like answered by an AFCC expert? Let us know and your question could be answered in the next *AFCC eNEWS*.

[Email your questions...](#)

EARN AFCC DOLLARS

Each time a colleague joins AFCC as a first-time member and names you as the referral source on the membership application, you earn ten AFCC dollars to spend on conference registrations, membership renewals and publications. For more information, please contact AFCC at afcc@afccnet.org or (608) 664-3750.

fund is supported entirely through member donations. Every cent of your contribution goes directly to conference scholarships and donations are tax deductible for US taxpayers. Your donation will make a lasting difference in not only the practice of a professional in our field, but also in the lives of the children and families they serve.

[Donate today](#)

Practice Dilemmas

Child Custody Evaluator

Proposed by Mindy Mitnick, EdM, MA, Edina, Minnesota

A common practice dilemma arises when a child custody evaluator receives pertinent information just after the report is completed. Here is last month's dilemma and a suggested solution by the author.

[Read more](#)

This new column invites readers to pose practice dilemmas that professionals in the various disciplines represented in AFCC may face and to comment and suggest possible solutions to dilemmas posed by other readers. Please send dilemmas, comments and solutions for possible inclusion in upcoming issues of the AFCC eNEWS to Leslye Hunter at lhunter@afccnet.org.

Nominate a Colleague for an AFCC Award

The AFCC Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award, Stanley Cohen Research Award and Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award, to be presented at the AFCC 49th Annual Conference in Chicago, June 6-9, 2012. Nominations must be received or postmarked on or before March 15, 2012. Please review the [award criteria and descriptions](#) for more information and submission instructions. Do you know a friend, colleague or program that deserves extra recognition this year? Surprise them with a nomination!

AFCC Board of Directors Nominations

The AFCC Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the AFCC Board of Directors. Recommended individuals must be AFCC members and have an interest in and knowledge of AFCC and its work. Nominations must be received by January 15, 2012, in order to be considered by the committee prior to the election at the AFCC 49th Annual Conference, June 6-9, 2012, in Chicago. The term is three years, beginning July 1, 2012, and concluding June 30, 2015. If you or a member you know is interested, please send first and last name, contact information, resume and a letter of intent to the AFCC Nominating Committee Chair, Bob Smith, c/o AFCC, 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719; Fax: (608) 664-3751 or email: afcc@afccnet.org.

Family Law in the News

Fraud Case Seen as a Red Flag for Psychology Research

By Benedict Carey, courtesy of the New York Times

A well-known psychologist in the Netherlands whose work has been published widely in professional journals falsified data and made up entire experiments, an investigating committee has

JOIN AFCC

Are you a member?

[Join or Renew](#)

AFCC offers member benefits that promote excellence in practice.

[View member benefits](#)

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. Readers are welcome to forward this e-newsletter to interested colleagues.

[AFCC eNEWS archive](#)

Website Version:

If you are having trouble viewing this email correctly, please view the website version by [clicking here](#).

Editor:

Leslye Hunter
editor@afccnet.org

AFCC welcomes your comments, questions or feedback. Please email the editor by [clicking here](#).

EMAIL UPDATE

found.

[Read more](#)

Obesity Fuels Custody Fights

By Ashby Jones and Shirley S. Wang, courtesy of the Wall Street Journal

The nation's waistline is expanding, and so too is the role of obesity in child-custody battles in the U.S.

[Read more](#)

When The Fairy Tale Ends In Divorce, Start Reading The Fables

By Edra J. Pollin, courtesy of Huffington Post

As a practitioner of family law, I am often reminded of the childhood fable involving the scorpion and the frog. For the uninitiated, the story is as follows: A scorpion and a frog meet on the bank of a stream. The scorpion asks the frog to carry him across the stream. The frog is reluctant to comply and asks the scorpion, "How do I know that you won't sting me?"

[Read more](#)

[Subscribe, Unsubscribe or Update Your Email Address](#)

AFCC will never share, distribute or publicize your email address.



Follow AFCC on Facebook!

[Click here](#)



6525 Grand Teton Plaza

Madison, WI 53719

Phone: (608) 664-3750

Fax: (608) 664-3751

www.afccnet.org



MEMBER CENTER

- >> [Family Court Review](#)
- >> [AFCC Conference Audio](#)
- >> [AFCC News](#)
- >> [Member Directory](#)
- >> [Member Resources](#)
- >> [Chapter Resources](#)
- >> [AFCC HOME](#)



PRACTICE DILEMMAS

Custody Evaluator Dilemma

Proposed by Mindy Mitnick, EdM, MA, Edina, Minnesota

You have completed a custody evaluation with two children ages 14 and 11. The following issues were prominent in the evaluation:

- Mother is volatile and has had numerous blow-ups with the 14-year-old daughter.
- The daughter went to live with her father during the evaluation and refused to see her mother for a period of time. The mother agreed to attend therapy with her daughter.
- The son has been asking for more time with his father and this appears to be based on his own wish and not due to pressure from his father.
- Dad has a past DWI but was not reported to be abusing alcohol when a chemical use assessment was completed.
- The parents have needed a parenting coordinator to assist with schedule and activity disputes.

Based on the information gathered, you were prepared to recommend a shared parenting arrangement with alternating weeks. The day before you were going to issue your report, you learned that the father received another DWI during the evaluation, which he did not disclose.

What do you do now?

Response by Mindy Mitnick

My evaluation reports contain a disclaimer as follows:

Information received after completion of this report could affect the conclusions and recommendations that follow.

This disclaimer allows for the possibility of a long lag time between writing the report and testifying in court if there is no settlement. There can be significant events and changes in the family during that time that could be important in deciding whether the recommendations are still appropriate.

I would write to or have a conference call with the attorneys and give them two options:

1. Issue the report based on the information I had, including a statement about the latest DWI, but indicating that I was not informed of it during the evaluation
2. Ask the attorneys to allow me to complete an update.

In my experience, the court often prefers the second option so that the recommendations are made based on the most reliable information available.

Search - Site Map



MEMBER CENTER

[» Family Court Review](#)

[» AFCC Conference Audio](#)

[» AFCC News](#)

[» Member Directory](#)

[» Member Resources](#)

[» Chapter Resources](#)

[» AFCC HOME](#)



AFCC Member News

Ken Altshuler, of Portland, Maine, was elected President of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. The mission of AAML is to provide leadership that promotes the highest degree of professionalism and excellence in the practice of family law.

Christine Coates, of Boulder, Colorado, was honored by the Association for Conflict Resolution with the John Haynes Distinguished Mediator Award in San Diego on October 15, 2011. This award is presented annually to a prominent and internationally recognized leader in mediation who demonstrates personal and professional commitment to finding mediation solutions to conflict while balancing therapeutic and legal perspectives.

Maria Cognetti, of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, was presented the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Fellow of the Year Award in recognition of her outstanding service to AAML and her contributions to the field of family law. She was also elected First Vice President of AAML.

patti cross, of Toronto, Ontario, was awarded the first Distinguished Service Award by the AFCC Ontario Chapter in recognition for her contributions to the chapter, the family justice system in Ontario and AFCC, as well as her other volunteer work.

Perri E. Mayes, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was elected President of the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR). ACR is a professional organization enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution.



MEMBER CENTER

- » [Family Court Review](#)
- » [AFCC Conference Audio](#)
- » [AFCC News](#)
- » [Member Directory](#)
- » [Member Resources](#)
- » [Chapter Resources](#)
- » [AFCC HOME](#)

Personality-Disordered Parents and Children who Resist Parental Contact Training Programs from AFCC and CFCC

AFCC and the University of Baltimore School of Law's Center for Families, Children and the Courts are offering two two-day training programs dealing with some of the most difficult issues that family law professionals face. Both programs will be held at the University of Baltimore School of Law. Receive a reduced registration rate when you register for both trainings.

December 5–6, 2011: well-known author and president of the High Conflict Institute Bill Eddy will present *Managing Personality-Disordered Parents*. This two-day training is designed for parenting coordinators, parenting facilitators, mediators, attorneys, judicial officers and mental health professionals who work with separating and divorcing families. Mr. Eddy's program will address the latest research on personality disorders, the significant differences among these disorders, the latest treatments, ways to work with these difficult client





MEMBER CENTER

- » [Family Court Review](#)
- » [AFCC Conference Audio](#)
- » [AFCC News](#)
- » [Member Directory](#)
- » [Member Resources](#)
- » [Chapter Resources](#)
- » [AFCC HOME](#)



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ten Tips for the Holidays

By Robin M. Deutsch, Ph.D.

1. Have a very specific plan for the holidays so there is no opportunity for confusion or conflict.

Parents may alternate or split holidays, but when there is disagreement about this plan, consider the longer view of alternating holidays by even and odd years. Holidays are often a time of heightened emotions, and the reality of the loss associated with separation or divorce is no more apparent than when parents must spend a holiday without their children or without old traditions.

2. Try to continue traditions of the past for the children.

If they are accustomed to spending Christmas Eve with one extended family, try to continue that tradition, if not every year then in alternate years. Parents should consider maintaining some of the family traditions the first year after the separation, and alternating beginning the following year.

3. If you can continue some traditions together, make them clear, attending to details of who, what, where, when, and how.

Some families are able to be together without conflict arising, but parents often have different expectations about the experience itself, as well as the amount of time they will be together. The most important thing for the children is that they do not experience conflict between their parents.

4. Create new traditions that feel special to the children and family.

This is an opportunity to establish new practices for the adult who does not have the children, such as time with friends, volunteering, movie days and travel. This is an opportunity for the newly formed family, as well.

5. Think long-term—what do you want your children to remember about holidays when they have their own children?

For children, holidays are magical. It is often the little rituals and practices that are most memorable, such as baking a pie, playing a game or lighting the fire.

6. Remember, children's memories include all senses—what they saw, heard, smelled, tasted and touched.

To the extent possible, create a memory that involves each of these senses and describe it, e.g. we always listen to this music, eat cranberry sauce, watch this movie, read this book, take this walk and cut these branches. Do not allow conflict to enter into these memories.

7. Self-care is very important.

Life for the adults has significantly changed. Find new ways to care for yourself, e.g. exercise, friends, books, movies, clubs, martial arts, dance, classes, activities that bring new energy and attention. You want to rejuvenate yourself and refocus on something to help you reconstitute yourself in your new life.

8. Keep your expectations small and be flexible.

Focus on one thing that matters most to you during the holidays, e.g.

some sense of connection to your family, having some time with extended family or close friends, creating a new tradition, continuing a tradition. Your holiday time will not be the same, but you can decide that you will have one small goal that you will work toward creating or preserving. Holidays may be accompanied by unmet needs and dashed hopes. By thinking small you can manage disappointment and decrease stress.

9. Though you, the parent, may feel disoriented and lost in the changed family, keep your focus on the children and the new family constellations.

Make the holidays about your children, which means helping them to feel good about spending holiday time with the other parent.

10. In ten years or twenty years, what do you want to see when you look back on these years of change?

From that long view you can highlight the tone and experience of these transformed holidays.

Robin Deutsch, PhD, is a former AFCC President and is a psychologist in Boston. She is the director of the Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School.

6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719
Phone 608.664.3750 Fax 608.664.3751 afcc@afccnet.org www.afccnet.org

[Search - Site Map](#)