



ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY AND
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

AFCC 10th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations
Research and Practice: Bridging the Gap and Finding the Balance
November 1-3, 2012, Arizona Grand Resort, Phoenix, Arizona

The upcoming symposium focuses on social science research and its increased prominence in custody evaluations. The Opening Session, *Utilizing Research in Practice: Family Law's Catch 22*, will examine the question of whether social science research provides the answers we're looking for or just more fodder for disagreement. Either way, increased use of research creates greater demands on professionals of all disciplines. The General Session, *A Roadmap to Research in Child Custody Evaluations*, will address how to use relevant research effectively and ethically in evaluations.

[Read more about the opening and general sessions and presenters](#)

[View the conference brochure](#)

[Register online](#)

[Online hotel reservations](#)

[Things to do in Phoenix](#)

Scholarships to the Symposium

Scholarships covering the cost of registration, a pre-symposium institute, a certificate of attendance and admission to all food and beverage functions will be awarded for the 10th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations. The application deadline is September 4, 2012.

[Guidelines and criteria](#)

[Apply for a scholarship](#)

Child Welfare Mediation Guidelines

The Guidelines for Child Protection Mediation (CPM) were adopted unanimously by the AFCC Board of Directors at the AFCC 49th Annual Conference in Chicago.

The Guidelines were developed by the Child Welfare Collaborative Decision Making Network, which operates with the support of a number of collaborating organizations including AFCC, American Humane Association (AHA), National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), National Center for State Courts, the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC), the Werner Institute at Creighton University, and the University of South Florida Conflict Resolution Collaborative. A workgroup of CPM practitioners, program administrators, researchers and academics have worked diligently to create these guidelines incorporating CPM practices from throughout North America.

[Thank you to members of the Child Welfare Collaborative Decision Making Network](#)

[Read more about the Child Welfare Collaborative Decision Making Network](#)

[Click here for the Guidelines](#)

Ask the Experts

Top Ten Tips for When to Withdraw as Parenting Coordinator

By Siri Gottlieb, JD, LMSW, Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW, and Christine A. Coates, MEd, JD

What is the difference between a challenging but manageable case and one where the dynamics or behaviors indicate that the PC needs to withdraw? The following list was assembled by the authors from a session they presented, *Getting out of Dodge: When to Pull the Plug on Parenting Coordination Clients*, at the AFCC 49th

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Upcoming Conferences

[AFCC Phoenix brochure](#)

AFCC 10th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

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Phoenix, Arizona
[Conference brochure](#)
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AFCC 50th Anniversary Conference

Riding the Wave of the Future: Global Voices, Expanding Choices
May 29-June 1, 2013
JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE
Los Angeles, California
[Call for Proposals](#)
[Online submission form](#)

AFCC-AAML Conference

September 26-28, 2013
Gaylord National Resort
Washington, DC Metro Area

AFCC Regional Training Conference

November 7-9, 2013
The Westin Crown Center
Kansas City, Missouri

AFCC Training Programs

Intractable Issues in Child Custody Disputes

Mindy Mitnick, EdM, MA
December 3-4, 2012
University of Baltimore, School of Law,
Student Center
Baltimore, Maryland

Parenting Coordination: Working with High Conflict Families

Annual Conference in Chicago in June 2012. The Honorable George Czutrín also participated in the workshop. The list is based on a questionnaire completed by members of the AFCC Parenting Coordination Network listserv.

[Read more](#)

AFCC 50th Anniversary Conference

Riding the Wave of the Future: Global Voices, Expanding Choices

May 29–June 1, 2013, JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE

Join AFCC next year in Los Angeles as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary. Much has changed in the family court system since 1963. In the last five decades AFCC members have spearheaded major reforms in the family law community; however, professionals continue to face changes and challenges. What does the future hold? How will the AFCC community influence the constantly evolving family law system? Join us in Los Angeles, the birthplace of AFCC, as we begin to chart the course for the next 50 years.

Call For Proposals

Play a part in forming the conversation by presenting a workshop. AFCC is accepting proposals for 90-minute workshops now through October 4, 2012. Proposals must be submitted using the online submission form. See the Call for Proposals for topic suggestions and submission instructions and guidelines.

[Call for proposals](#)

[Online submission form](#)

AFCC History: Did you know?

As we prepare for the 50th Anniversary Conference next year in Los Angeles we will highlight some AFCC trivia and facts from the past 50 years.

Do you know where the first AFCC conference was held?

The first AFCC conference was held Saturday, September 7, 1963, in Los Angeles, California. Conciliation counselors and judges from six counties in California gathered to talk shop well into the evening. Among those participating in the inaugural event were two Los Angeles Conciliation Court counselors who would lead AFCC in the future. Meyer Elkin, who would serve as AFCC President in 1977 and as editor of the journal from 1963 to 1986, and Stanley Cohen, AFCC Executive Director from 1983 to 1988 and co-editor of the journal from 1986 to 1991.

[Read more AFCC history](#)

Member News

Secretary of the AFCC Board of Directors, **Judge Peter Boshier** of Wellington, New Zealand, was appointed to The Law Commission for a period of five years, effective 10 December 2012 and will be stepping down as Principal Family Court Judge of New Zealand. The Law Commission is an independent Crown entity, funded by the New Zealand Government, which reviews areas of the law in need of updating, reforming or developing and makes recommendations to Parliament. Judge Boshier also recently traveled to Palau, Micronesia, where he has been assisting the local judiciary and service providers with how family violence might be best approached by the community. Palau is a small island republic near Guam operating in free association with the United States.

AFCC Immediate Past President **Linda Fieldstone** of Miami, Florida, **Raymond McNeal** of Ocala, Florida, and **Lawrence Datz** of Jacksonville, Florida, were recognized at the American Psychological Association 2012 Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida, for AFCC's support and leadership in promoting parenting coordination in Florida and across the United States.

Barbara Jo Fidler, **Nicholas Bala**, and **Michael Saini**, all of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, have written a new book on alienation. *Children Who Resist Postseparation Parental Contact: A Differential Approach for Legal and Mental Health Professionals*, published by Oxford University Press, is a critical, empirically-based review of parental alienation that integrates the best research evidence with clinical insight from interviews with leading scholars and practitioners.

Chapter News

AFCC Chapters play a significant role in the organization, providing members with opportunities to network and learn at the state or provincial and local level.

Christine Coates, MEd, JD
December 5–6, 2012
University of Baltimore, School of Law,
Student Center
Baltimore, Maryland

Nuts and Bolts of Parenting

Coordination:

Helping High Conflict Parents Resolve Disputes

Joan B. Kelly, PhD
March 4–5, 2013
Loyola University Chicago, Philip H. Corboy
Law Center
Chicago, Illinois

When Nuts are Loose and Bolts Don't Fit:

Advanced Practices in Parenting Coordination

Arnold T. Shienvold, PhD
March 6–7, 2013
Loyola University Chicago, Phillip H. Corboy
Law Center
Chicago, Illinois

AFCC Chapter Conferences

Ontario Chapter Annual Conference

The GPS of Family Law... The Road Not Taken

October 19, 2012
Toronto Public Library
Toronto, Ontario

[More information](#)

Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

Cultivating Resilience in Children, Families and Professionals

February 1–3, 2013
Hilton Sedona Resort and Spa
Sedona, Arizona

[More information](#)

Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference

Collateral Damage: Addressing the Hidden Costs to Families and Professionals in Chronic High Conflict Cases

March 7–8, 2013
New Orleans, Louisiana

[More information](#)

Florida Chapter Annual Conference

Creating Our Future: One Family at a Time

March 15–16, 2013
The Rosen Center
Orlando, Florida

[More information](#)

Washington Chapter Conference

Pinnacles of Practice in Times of Challenge

April 6, 2013
Washington Athletic Club
Seattle, Washington

[More information](#)

Join AFCC

Are you a member?

[Join](#) or [Renew](#)

AFCC offers member benefits that promote excellence in practice.

[View member benefits](#)

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 question](#)

About AFCC eNEWS

Readers are welcome to forward this e-newsletter to interested colleagues. All opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of AFCC.

Editor:

Erin Sommerfeld
editor@afccnet.org

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Chapters often address issues and hold discussions unique to the state or province in which they operate. AFCC currently has 15 chapters. [Click here to find one in your area](#). You can easily add a chapter membership to your AFCC membership online. In order to join the chapter, you must be a member of the AFCC parent organization.

In addition to the 15 existing chapters, three more are in the process of forming. If you would like to be involved with the development of an AFCC chapter in one of these areas, please contact the following coordinating members:

Alberta, Canada—[Eileen Ailon](#) in Calgary or [Stephen Carter](#) in Edmonton
Connecticut—[Linda Smith](#) or [Marilou Giovannucci](#)
Illinois—[Mary Gardner](#) or [Nanette McCarthy](#)

Conferences of Interest

Association for Conflict Resolution

2012 Annual Conference

Creating Connections: Conflict Resolution in Deeply Divided Times

September 12–15, 2012

Sheraton New Orleans

New Orleans, Louisiana

[More Information](#)

ABA Section of Family Law

Fall CLE Conference

October 10–13, 2012

Four Seasons Philadelphia

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[More Information](#)

International Academy of Collaborative Professionals

13th Annual Networking and Educational Forum

Reflections on Collaborative Leadership

October 18–21, 2012

Palmer House Hilton Hotel

Chicago, Illinois

[More Information](#)

Family Law in the News

Your Money—Grandparents, purse strings and divorce

By Tamara Ehrenfeld, Courtesy of Reuters

Here's a sad scenario: Grandma and Grandpa pay for camp, shoes and college funds. But something goes awry; the kids' parents decide to split, and next thing you know it's Grandma and Grandpa who are out in the cold, writing checks but missing their grandchildren.

[Read more](#)

Study finds that avoiding lies can improve your health

By Sharon Jayson, Courtesy of USA TODAY

A new study shows that honest interactions can be beneficial to one's health, both physical and mental. Each week for 10 weeks, 110 individuals, ages 18–71, took a lie detector test and completed health and relationship measures assessing the number of major and minor lies they told that week, says lead author Anita Kelly, a psychology professor at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. She presented findings at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association.

[Read more](#)

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Ask the Experts

Top Ten Tips for When to Withdraw as Parenting Coordinator

Siri Gottlieb, JD, LMSW, Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW, and Christine A. Coates, MEd, JD

The following list was assembled by the authors from a session they presented, *Getting out of Dodge: When to Pull the Plug on Parenting Coordination Clients*, at the AFCC 49th Annual Conference in Chicago in June 2012. The Honorable George Czutrin also participated in the workshop. The list is based on a questionnaire completed by members of the AFCC Parenting Coordination Network listserv.

1. The Parenting Coordinator (PC) feels unsafe because of a client's rage or threats of violence.

These threats may be real, implied or just the PC's perception. In any case, the PC has the right to feel safe. The degree of risk should be analyzed as carefully as possible, preferably with the aid of peer consultation. If the PC decides not to withdraw, s/he should ensure that questions about safety do not impact the PC's objectivity and neutrality.

2. The PC believes the case needs a fresh perspective.

Clients can tug us emotionally in different directions and try to pull us into their drama. It's an ongoing challenge not to get inducted into one client's perspective to the detriment of the other client. If the PC feels his/her perspective has become clouded, it is advisable to step back and allow another professional to take a new look at the situation.

3. A client is not paying.

Parenting coordination is typically a paid service. PCs should be compensated fairly and appropriately for this demanding work. It is reasonable to step down from a case if a client is not meeting his or her financial responsibility, and this right of the PC should be clearly set forth in the order appointing the PC and in the PC's retainer agreement.

Many PCs require the parties to maintain a retainer to avoid the situation of money running out while the family remains in crisis. No PC wants to abandon parents because of failure to pay. Protect yourself and the clients by always having a retainer equivalent to at least several hours' work.

4. The PC is concerned about a possible board complaint, having a grievance filed or being sued.

Because parenting coordination is an ADR intervention with high conflict parents, it is not unusual for at least one parent to be disgruntled. A process for complaints about the PC's services or conduct should be clearly stated in the order appointing the PC or in the PC's contract with the clients. Such language could include a provision requiring that before the complaint is filed, the client meet with the PC and attempt to resolve the issue and then, if allowed, attend a meeting with the parties, the PC and the judge.

A PC has a right to avoid threats to his or her integrity, role and professional status by withdrawing when a grievance or lawsuit is likely.

5. The client refuses to work with the PC and has asked the court to terminate the appointment or has simply stopped paying in order to force the PC to withdraw.

At times the relationship between the PC and a client is intractable and has become unworkable. In such circumstances it may be best to withdraw to avoid the appearance of bias. The order appointing the PC or the PC's contract with the clients should include a process for selecting a successor PC that allows the exchange of information between the former and new PC.

6. A client is non-compliant with the PC's recommendations, decisions or established protocols.

Given that parenting coordination is a voluntary process, client non-compliance may preclude an ability to continue to serve fairly and effectively. The PC should take inventory of his/her emotional reactions and assess their impact on providing appropriate service.

7. Both clients are hostile to the PC and to the process.

There is no point in continuing what is a voluntary process with people who don't want to participate. However, it's not uncommon for the parties to "take turns" being angry with the PC. This can often be worked through. If they're both antagonistic, sometimes humor can be effective: "Well, at least your anger at me is one thing you two agree on!" If neither wants to proceed, then a letter to the attorneys or court is in order, explaining that the parties are opting out.

8. The litigation between the parties is not abating and/or the attorneys are overly adversarial.

Parenting coordination does not occur in a vacuum. While there may be some matters subject to resolution by the PC, other issues may need to be litigated. In addition, the parties or lawyers may still be trying to litigate matters that were intended to be addressed in parenting coordination. These dynamics may undermine the role and function of the PC. If a lawyer is acting in a manner that impedes the parenting coordination process and the customary goals of parenting coordination (improved communication, problem-solving, and quick resolution of disputes), then the PC may be rendered ineffective. If a heart-to-heart talk with the offending attorney is not productive, termination may be indicated.

9. When the PC feels so negatively about a client that it impairs the PC's ability to be effective.

Countertransference, a long understood therapeutic principle, is always present in human relationships, including that between the PC and client. It may be that the PC feels so very strongly (positively or negatively) about a client that these feelings inappropriately influence his/her interventions and decisions. Under such circumstances the PC should self-reflect and make every effort to manage the countertransference in a responsible way. Supervision can help. If the PC's work continues to be compromised, withdrawal is indicated.

10. When the case feels like it's sucking the very ectoplasm from your soul.

This tip was offered by one of the responders to our survey and made us chuckle, both from the hyperbole and also from the identification with the feeling expressed. If you are totally drained by the service to your clients, protect yourself and your clients by a prompt withdrawal and substitution of a successor PC.

Get out fast, but get out responsibly. Make sure your PC agreement outlines the process for early termination, and follow it carefully. Send letters to clients and their attorneys explaining your inability to continue serving and reminding them of the contractual protocol for termination. Discharge your duties responsibly, but save your soul!

Siri Gottlieb, JD, LMSW of Ann Arbor Michigan, practiced law for 14 years before becoming a licensed social worker. She has been in private practice (psychotherapy, divorce mediation, divorce coaching and parenting coordination) since 1994. Siri is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, has been published in various journals and is past-president of the Collaborative Practice Institute of Michigan.

Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW of Dundas, Ontario, Canada, has been a social worker for more than 30 years and is in private practice providing counseling, mediation and assessment services on most matters of family life. He has a weekly parenting column in his city's daily newspaper and has hosted 65 episodes of a reality television show working with newlywed couples. Gary is also a frequent presenter throughout North America.

Christine (Christie) A. Coates, MEd, JD of Boulder, Colorado, is an experienced family law attorney, who emphasizes alternative dispute resolution in domestic relations and has been a mediator since 1984. A former president of AFCC, she chaired the Task Force on Parenting Coordination, which developed the AFCC Guidelines for Parenting Coordination. Christie is the co-author of two books, is a frequent speaker and trainer, and adjunct professor at the University of Colorado School of Law.



Things to do in Phoenix

The Arizona Grand Resort is located near the 17,000 acre [South Mountain Preserve](#), the largest municipal park in the world and the most visited hiking destination in Arizona. As the location suggests, the views are stunning! The resort is located just six miles from the Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. As the area's only AAA Four-Diamond all-suite hotel, the Arizona Grand Resort offers a variety of amenities to keep you comfortable and entertained.

- [Arizona Grand Golf Course](#) is a challenging 18-hole course with unique features, panoramic views of the mountains and desert landscape. Dramatic elevation changes highlight the par 71 layout. Players of all abilities will feel comfortable.
- The [Arizona Grand Athletic Club](#) was voted one of the "Top 10 Fitness Facilities in Arizona." The 20,000 square foot facility includes more than 40 cardio machines; a separate free weight room; more than 45 fitness classes per week (yoga, Pilates, spinning, Zumba, water aerobics, and strength training); a five-lane, 20 meter, heated lap pool; fitness assessments and personal training. Access to the club is included in the resort fee, which is waived for reservations made at the AFCC group rate.
- [Arizona Grand Spa](#) is the largest resort spa and salon in Arizona. The spa menu includes massages, facials, therapeutic body treatments and full salon services, all in a luxurious environment. The spa is open daily from 9am to 8pm and accepts advance appointments.
- [Outdoor hiking, biking and running options are accessible from the resort.](#) The resort's trails will connect you to over 60 miles of trails in South Mountain Preserve, which was recently named one of the top destinations for hiking and mountain views by National Geographic magazine. Maps to the preserve are available at the fitness center. Mountain bike rentals are available through the concierge.
- Onsite dining options include a Mexican restaurant, [Aunt Chilada's](#) and a Western steakhouse, [Rustler's Rooste](#). Aunt Chilada's serves your favorites from homemade chips and award winning salsa to fresh-made tamales. Eat outside on the casita style patio or indoors in the dining room. Rustler's Rooste overlooks the valley adjacent to the resort. Family owned since 1971, this authentic western steakhouse offers a fun atmosphere where you can visit with the live steer that lives outside or enter the dining room by sliding down a tin slide. Stick around after dinner for live country and western music.
- There are shopping options very near the resort: Arizona Mills Mall, Casa Paloma, Chandler Fashion Center and the Mill Avenue District. [Mill Avenue District](#) is near the University of Arizona and offers boutique clothes, restaurants, salons and spas. [Chandler Fashion Center](#) is the second largest mall in the Phoenix metro area and contains many well-known stores. [Casa Paloma](#) is an open-air specialty retail center.

[View](#) a map of the resort and nearby area [attractions](#) or download the resort [brochure](#) (PDF).

If you have a little extra time, plan to stay a few days and enjoy the Phoenix area. The AFCC room rate is available from October 26 to November 7.

- Have a western adventure with [Western Destinations](#). Experience the thrill of nature and the rugged beauty of the Sonoran Southwest. You can take a tour on horseback, stroll along the streets of an Old West town, eat like a cowboy at a cowboy cookout, then spend the evening around the campfire with friends and entertainment.
- [The Musical Instrument Museum](#), also known as The MIM, is located in north Phoenix and showcases musical instruments from around the world in 75,000 square feet of exhibition space. The MIM has a 299-seat music theater with a wide range of classic, jazz, world and contemporary music featured regularly; gourmet cafe, library, hands-on instrument room and museum store.
- Experience and embrace the magnificent beauty of the desert through a variety of tours and activities at the [Desert Botanical Garden](#). Daily and weekly activities are included with membership or admission, and are designed to accommodate individuals of any age and groups of any size. Audio and private tours are available for an additional fee.
- [Octane Raceway](#), the largest indoor go-kart racing and entertainment venue in the US, features two 1/4 mile tracks, 45+ mph karts, trackside bar and grill, billiards, rock climbing wall, and an arcade.
- The foremost showcase of Native American art and culture in the US, the [Heard Museum](#) teaches visitors about the cultures of tribes in the region through exhibits, demonstrations, live performances and displays of the work of contemporary Native American artists. Artists show their work during the week and musicians perform most weekends.
- [Camelback Mountain](#) overlooks Phoenix, Scottsdale and Paradise Valley. Hike to its summit at 2,700 feet to experience quiet tranquility while overlooking the spectacular beauty of the cityscape of the nation's fifth largest city. Camelback offers four different trails with varying degrees of difficulty from easy to strenuous; you can spend less than an hour on the easy trails, Bobby's Rock Trail or the Ramada Loop Trail. Enjoy the lasting views on the Cholla Trail or the greater rewards of summit panoramas atop the most popular and most difficult climb, Echo Canyon. Sunsets are a beautiful site from any of the trails.



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Thank you to members of the Child Welfare Collaborative Decision Making Network

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Opening Session—Utilizing Research in Practice: Family Law’s Catch 22

Thursday, November 1, 2012, 7:00pm–8:30pm

In a discussion moderated by current AFCC President, Arnold Shienvold, PhD, presenters will discuss relevance and quality of research in child custody evaluations, examining questions like: What is *quality* research? Can anyone, other than a trained social scientist understand and apply research effectively? Is the research presented relevant to the question before the court? Can the judge really rely on research when extant theory and practice collide? Using a case study approach to look at the possibilities for social science research’s use in evaluations, presenters will bring their varying experience and perspectives to the table.

This session will be presented by: Donald S. Eisenberg, JD, a family law attorney in private practice in Long Beach, California; Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman, a judge in the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Los Angeles, California; Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, MSL, the Maconda Brown O’Connor Professor at Smith College for Social Work in Northampton, Massachusetts; Matthew Sullivan, PhD, a clinical psychologist in private practice in Palo Alto, California; and moderated by Arnold Shienvold, PhD, the current AFCC President and a clinical psychologist in private practice in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

General Session—A Roadmap to Research in Child Custody Evaluations

Friday, November 2, 2012, 8:30am–10:00am

As social science research is more commonly used in child custody evaluations, it is often left to the practitioner to determine whether research is high quality or junk. This session presents a roadmap, the “Research Decision Tree” for the systematic and ethical use of research in parenting plan evaluations.

This session will be presented by Leslie Drozd, PhD, the co-editor of *Parenting Plan Evaluations: Applied Research for the Family Court* and a clinical and forensic psychologist in private practice in Newport Beach, California; Nancy W. Olesen, PhD, a clinical psychologist in private practice in San Rafael, California; and Michael Saini, PhD, co-author of *Systematic Synthesis of Qualitative Research* and an assistant professor of social work at the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.