



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

The Advocacy Institute Is Pleased to Present

DCF'S ROADMAP TO INCREASING AND SUPPORTING KIN PLACEMENTS

November 24, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

WEBINAR

Program Summary

This training will provide a legal perspective on the importance of children maintaining family connections. The presenters will provide an overview of recent DCP&P policy changes, review presumptive eligibility and what it entails, and provide guidance on how staff may look to DASG to help understand and interpret criminal background checks. The training will then focus on kinship care values, common challenges with kinship care, addressing skepticism that staff may have concerning kinship care, and roles the legal system can play in helping children maintain family connections.

Eligibility

This program is only open to Deputy and Assistant Attorneys General in the DCF practice group and DCF agency attorneys invited to attend. Registrants will receive the course materials prior to the program date.

Faculty

Tiffany Allen, MSW, is a social worker and Research Director at ChildFocus Partners where she provides technical assistance and training on kinship care practice and policy. She is part of a team of national kinship care experts who have worked for over 20 years to ensure that children, youth, and families have a voice in the services and policies that impact them. She has led kinship reform efforts in jurisdictions across the country, including Kentucky; Clark County, Nevada; Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; and several New York counties. Ms. Allen spent the majority of her career at Child Trends, a nonpartisan research nonprofit, where she was a team member for the experimental evaluations of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids adoption recruitment

program and the Family Finding program. At Child Trends, she led the 2007 National Kinship Care survey and conducted research in kinship diversion practices in Delaware and Virginia.

Heidi Redlich Epstein, JD, MSW, is the Director of Kinship Policy and State Projects at the ABA Center on Children and the Law. She helped develop and currently co-manages www.grandfamilies.org, a national legal resource of kinship laws and resources, in partnership with Casey Family Programs and Generations United. Her other kinship efforts include providing training and technical assistance on kinship issues and helping to develop the National Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards. In her State Projects work, Ms. Epstein manages the Permanency Barriers Project and provides technical assistance and legal training to judges, attorneys, and social service professionals on various permanency issues. Prior to her work at the ABA, she was a Law Guardian for Legal Aid of Maryland and a residential social worker in upstate New York.

Clinton Page, Esq. is the Director of Legal and Legislative Affairs for the Department of Children and Families. He oversees the operations of the Administrative Hearings Unit, the Child Abuse Record Information Unit, the Department's Litigation Unit, and the Department's Legislative Unit. He also provides advice and guidance to all Divisions within the Department to ensure compliance with State statutes and regulations. Mr. Page previously served as a Legal Specialist in the Office of Legal, Regulatory, and Legislative Affairs where he assisted with policy development and training staff on new initiatives and legal strategy. Mr. Page has also served as a Deputy Attorney General in the Division of Law's DCF practice group, where he handled guardianship and protective services litigation in Middlesex and Essex counties. He provided training for the agency's staff and served as the Division of Law's representative on the Children in Court Improvement Committee. Mr. Page held judicial clerkships in both the Court of Common Pleas in Pennsylvania and the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. He graduated with honors and a pro bono distinction from Widener University Delaware Law School where he was a member of the Delaware Journal of Corporate Law. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Scranton.

Darlene Fusco is the Deputy Director of Adoption Operations, Resource Families and Resource Family Licensing in the Department of Children and Families. She supports the Assistant Commissioner of Child Protection and Permanency by overseeing all statewide operations involving Adoption, Resource and Resource Family Licensing. She is responsible for evaluating and supporting statewide resource family initiatives, recruitment and retention efforts as well as all areas of adoption including oversight of the subsidy program and adoption exchange and registry. She also oversees state resource family licensing regulations to ensure conformance with DCF policy, federal and state laws and regulations.

Ms. Fusco's experience at DCF includes serving as the Area Director of the Bergen/Hudson Area Office, as an Assistant Area Director, Local Office Manager, casework supervisor, and Family Services Specialist. She is a graduate of the DCF- National Child Welfare Workforce Institute - Leadership Academy for Middle Managers. Ms. Fusco earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from St. Peter's College and a Certified Social Work Manager Certificate from the Academy of Certified Social Work Managers.

CLE Credit

NJ CLE Credit: This program has been approved by the Board on Continuing Legal Education of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for 3.0 hours of Alternative Verifiable Learning Format (AVF) total CLE credit. Of these, 0.0 qualify as hours of credit for ethics/professionalism.

Registration

Those who are eligible to apply should use the Zoom Webinar registration link in the Program Announcement email. Students who are registered will receive a confirmation email with a link to access the program.

Students must download Zoom before the webinar in order for the AGAI to record polling responses that are required for attendance verification and CLE credit.

The AGAI will be unable to verify attendance or grant CLE credit to students who have not downloaded Zoom before the webinar.