

# IT TAKES A VISION: CHANGING LIVES BY CHANGING SYSTEMS

## JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN CONFERENCE

### OCTOBER 28, 2009 • CAPITOL PLAZA, MONTPELIER



The conference is sponsored by the [Justice for Children Task Force](#) with funding from the Vermont Court Improvement Program.

#### Schedule

- 8:30 – 9:00 Registration & Conversation
- 9:00 – 9:15 **Welcome**  
**Chief Justice Paul Reiber**, Vermont Supreme Court  
**Commissioner Steve Dale**, Department for Children and Families
- 9:15 – 10:00 **Keynote**  
**[AT RISK CHILDREN: WHERE WE'VE BEEN AND WHERE WE'RE GOING](#)**  
**Hon. Leonard Edwards** (*retired*)
- 10:00 -10:15 Break
- 10:15– 11:45 **Morning Workshops**  
**[The Untold Story of Education and Youth in Foster Care](#)**: Simple New Steps to Improve Outcomes (also offered in the afternoon)  
**[Engaging Non-Custodial Fathers in Child Welfare Cases](#)** (also offered in the afternoon)  
**[Navigating the Legal and Cultural Impact of Immigration Law on Children and Families](#)**  
**[Differential Response to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect](#)**  
**[Promising Trends: Engaging Families & Communities in Vermont Child Welfare](#)**  
**[Strategies for Successful Youth Participation in the Court Process](#)**
- 11:45 – 1:00 Lunch  
Guerilla Theater by Youth in Foster Care
- 1:15 – 2:45 **Afternoon Workshops**  
**[The Untold Story of Education and Youth in Foster Care](#)**: Simple New Steps to Improve Outcomes (also offered in the morning)  
**[Engaging Non-Custodial Fathers in Child Welfare Cases](#)** (also offered in the morning)  
**[Treating Juvenile Offenders in Juvenile Courts](#)**  
**[Engaging Families and Building Safety through Family Time Coaching](#)**  
**[Motivating Behavior Change and Effective Case Planning](#)**  
**[The Challenges of Kinship Care – How Do We Make It Work?](#)**
- 2:45 – 3:00 Break
- 3:00 – 3:45 **[Information is Power](#)**: Showcasing the ***Fostering Court Improvement Tool***  
**Cindy Walcott**, Family Services Deputy Commissioner  
**Christopher Church**, Managing Attorney, Georgia Supreme Court's *Measures for Court* program
- 3:45 – 4:15 **[Evaluating the JJPA](#)**: What is Working? What is Not?  
**Hon. Amy M. Davenport**, Chief Administrative Judge for Vermont Trial Courts
- 4:15 Adjourn



## **AT RISK CHILDREN: WHERE WE'VE BEEN AND WHERE WE'RE GOING**

Judge Edwards will address the significant changes that have taken place in Vermont over the past few years regarding children in the juvenile court, and the remaining challenges facing the courts, the community and the State. Based on his national perspective, Judge Edwards will make suggestions about practices and programs for the courts to consider. The theme is that there has been great progress, but there is still much more to do.

***Hon. Leonard Edwards** (retired) is a Judge-in-Residence with the California Administrative Office of the Courts. In that capacity he provides technical assistance to the courts of California, particularly in areas involving children and families. Judge Edwards served for 26 years as a Superior Court Judge in Santa Clara County, California. He sat as a domestic relations judge and as a juvenile court judge.*

*During his judicial career, Judge Edwards founded and was the first president of the Juvenile Court Judges of California, was co-founder of the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council, was co-founder of Kids In Common, and founder of the Child Advocates of Santa Clara County. In 2002-2003, Judge Edwards was the President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Judge Edwards has taught at the University of Santa Clara Law School, Stanford Law School, and the California Judicial College. He has provided judicial trainings in more than 46 states and 8 foreign countries. Judge Edwards has written widely, including a book entitled *Child Abuse and the Legal System*. Judge Edwards has received many awards, including the 2004 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence.*

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## Morning Workshops 10:15 – 11:45



### **The Untold Story of Education and Youth in Foster Care: Simple New Steps to Improve Outcomes** (also offered in the afternoon)

How can judges, lawyers, social workers, guardians ad litem, and others use proven strategies to improve the lives of children? Learn what the key educational issues are for children in foster care and what you can do to advocate for better outcomes, one child at a time. Find out about the education stability provisions of the federal Fostering Connections to Success Act and what Vermont is doing to implement those provisions. Participants will receive useful resources from the [Legal Center for Foster Care and Education](#), the Vermont Department of Education, and the Department for Children and Families.

#### **PANELISTS:**

**Ashley, a high school student**

**Kathleen McNaught, J.D.**, is the Assistant Director at the ABA Center on Children and the Law. Kathleen was a faculty member for the Casey Family Program's Vermont Breakthrough Series Collaborative on School Stability.

**Joan Rock** is the Resource Coordinator for the Barre Family Services Division district office.

**Brigid Scheffert** is the Superintendent of the Washington West Supervisory Union. Brigid was a school principal in Lamoille County for 20 years and developed the Intervention Support Program which allows all students to be educated in their home school, with no out-of-district placements.

#### **MODERATOR:**

**Fayneese Miller, Ph.D.** is Dean of University of Vermont's College of Education and Social Services. Dr. Miller collaborated with the U.S. Department of Justice's National Truancy Prevention Association to write a bench book on truancy for family court judges.

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### **Engaging Non-Custodial Fathers in Child Welfare Cases** (also offered in afternoon)

"Without involved fathers, kids are more at risk to be poor, become teen parents, fail in school, and come in contact with the criminal justice system." (from the National Fatherhood Initiative's website). Vermont juvenile law requires early identification and location of absent parents and preservation of important family relations, consideration of kinship placement, and gives priority to non-custodial parents when the court orders the removal of a child from the home. This workshop will offer legal, social work, and policy strategies for better engaging non-custodial, non-perpetrating fathers in child welfare cases. Learn what courts, attorneys, GALs, and social workers can do to better engage fathers and paternal kin, and avoid delays in reaching permanency. Workshop participants will receive a copy of the book "Advocating for Nonresident Fathers in Child Welfare Court Cases."

#### **PANELISTS:**

**Matthew Fraidin** is Director of the HIV/AIDS law clinic and Associate Professor of Law at the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law. Professor Fraidin is a member of the Steering Committee of the Parent Representation Project of the ABA Center on Children and the Law, and regularly addresses local and national groups on issues relating to child welfare and family law.

**Milton Scott, M.B.A.** is a Program Specialist for Community-Based Programming at the National Fatherhood Initiative in Maryland

**Karen Jenkins, M.S.**, is Director of Public Child Welfare Initiatives for American Humane located in Colorado. Ms. Jenkins was the Program Director for the Office of Children and Youth Services for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and has more than 25 years of experience in the public child welfare system at both the county and state level.

**MODERATOR:**

**Hon. Leonard Edwards** (retired), California Administrative Office of the Courts

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## Navigating the Legal and Cultural Impact of Immigration Law on Children and Families

Attorney Arthur Edersheim will establish a ground work for understanding the various immigration categories with a focus on the legal implications this has for children and their families, as well as the legal consequences that may arise when children become a part of the juvenile court process and child protection system. Karen Fondacaro, Ph.D., will speak about her work with Connecting Cultures – a mental health program which is part of University of Vermont’s Department of Psychology. Connecting Cultures helps refugees address the psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical challenges that immigration presents for those immigrating to Vermont as refugees. A primary goal of Connecting Cultures is the development and dissemination of empirically-supported strategies, which include: 1) community-based needs assessment/skills and training; 2) direct clinical services; and 3) mental health research.

**PANELISTS:**

**Arthur Edersheim** supervises the South Royalton Legal Clinic's student clinicians. He specializes in immigration, domestic violence, family, landlord-tenant, and poverty law. He teaches the immigration law course at Vermont Law School and is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. He is the Project Coordinator for Vermont Immigrant Assistance, which was established in 2003 to protect the rights of immigrants in domestic violence, human rights, and general civil rights in critical immigration procedures. VIA provides pro bono legal services on behalf of low-income immigrants and refugees.

**Karen Fondacaro**, Clinical Professor and the Director of Connecting Cultures, a UVM clinical science program emphasizing research and mental health services for refugees.

**MODERATOR:**

**Cynthia Frantz** is an attorney who has been representing parents and children for the past ten years.

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## Differential Response to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

As of July 1, 2009, DCF Family Services has two options available to respond to child safety concerns. This flexibility allows a tailored response, depending on the nature and severity of the alleged child maltreatment. In the assessment response, the focus is no longer on “Who did it”?, but rather on “How can we engage the family to support their appropriate parenting”?

What does this mean for other professionals who play a role in keeping children safe? What adjustments will you need to make in your practice? What is likely to change for parties in a CHINS proceeding? Learn about the difference in differential response.

**Karen Shea**, MSW, is the Child Safety Assessment Manager at DCF Family Services and has been involved in strategic planning and implementation of Differential Response in Vermont.

**MODERATOR:**

**Cindy Walcott** is Deputy Commissioner, Vermont Department for Children and Families

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## Promising Trends: Engaging Families and Communities in Vermont Child Welfare

What should judges, attorneys, GALs, and others know about Family Group Conferencing and Family Safety Planning? This workshop will focus on these strategies used by Vermont Family Services to develop and strengthen partnerships among families, neighbors, community members, and service providers to protect and nurture children and other family members.

### **PANELISTS:**

**Sarah Gallagher** has worked for 15 years in various child welfare jobs before coming to the University of Vermont to coordinate the Child Welfare Training Partnership.

**Jill Richard** has worked in the anti-domestic and sexual violence movement for 14 years in a variety of capacities including several years at the Department for Children and Families as a casework consultant and program coordinator.

**Sarah Ward** has been training and consulting in the Vermont child welfare system for 12 years.

### **Moderator:**

**M. Kathleen Manley** is a Superior Court Judge appointed 1998. She previously served as a Family Court Magistrate from 1992 to 1998 and was in private practice prior to appointment to the bench, first in New York and then in Vermont.

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## Strategies for Successful Youth Participation in the Court Process

Federal law requires courts to consult with children about their permanency plan and about any transition plan for older youth. Vermont law requires children age 10 and up to be present at Temporary Care Hearings. How do we increase children's participation in hearings and effectively involve them in an age-appropriate manner? This workshop will cover strategies for successfully encouraging meaningful youth participation in the court process, and ways to make their participation more inviting.

### **PANELISTS:**

**Bob Belenky, Ph.D.**, is a retired clinical child psychologist who had an independent practice in his wilderness retreat. Bob has worked at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Goddard College and the Newton, Massachusetts public schools. He is completing his sixth year as a Vermont GAL.

**Hon. Harold Eaton, Jr.** is a Vermont trial court judge who engages youth in the courtroom. He has been a judge since 2004.

**Andrea Khoury, J.D.**, is project Director of the ABA's [Bar-Youth Empowerment Project](#) and is an Assistant Director of Child Welfare for the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues. She has represented children for 10 years in Maryland.

**A Vermont youth** will describe how professionals can support youth participation.

### **MODERATOR:**

**Susan M. Buckholz** is an attorney in private practice. She has represented children, parents, and legal guardians in Vermont juvenile court for 14 years.

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## Afternoon Workshops 1:15 - 2:45



### **The Untold Story of Education and Youth in Foster Care: Simple New Steps to Improve Outcomes** (also offered in the morning)

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**Karen Jenkins, M.S.**, is Director of Public Child Welfare Initiatives for American Humane located in Colorado. Ms. Jenkins was the Program Director for the Office of Children and Youth Services (OCYF) for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and has more than 25 years of experience in the public child welfare system at both the county and state level.

**MODERATOR:**

**Hon. Leonard Edwards** (retired), California Administrative Office of the Courts

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## **Treating Juvenile Offenders in Juvenile Courts**

The purpose of this presentation is to educate participants about the reasons to treat juvenile offenders in juvenile court, rather than in adult court. It will focus on juveniles charged with misdemeanors and “non-listed felonies”. In this interactive workshop, participants will look at issues of culpability, competency, services, and outcomes. Finally, participants will be randomly divided into groups of judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys and will apply the ideas discussed to a fictional case.

**Pam Marsh** is a graduate of Middlebury College and Harvard Law School. She is the President of Marsh Wagner & Winters, P.C., a general practice law firm in Middlebury. Since 1985, Pam has contracted with the Office of the Defender General to represent juveniles and parents in juvenile delinquency and child welfare cases. Since 1992, Pam’s firm has had the primary juvenile defense contract in Addison County.

**MODERATOR:**

**Bob Sheil** is the supervising attorney in the Office of the Juvenile Defender. He is a former Deputy State’s Attorney, assigned counsel contract attorney, and solo practitioner.

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## **Engaging Families and Building Safety through Family Time Coaching**

This workshop will include an overview of the Family Time Coaching model which is being used by Vermont Family Services to increase the safety, permanency, and well being of children. A panel of individuals who have worked with families using this model will share their experiences.

**PANELISTS:**

**Suzanne Legare Belcher**, MSW is a trainer with the University of Vermont/Department for Children and Families Child Welfare Training Partnership.

**Hon. James Crucitti** is presently presiding over the juvenile docket in Chittenden Family Court, where he has implemented a parent-child contact protocol for children in foster care.

**Cynthia Frantz** is an attorney who has been representing parents and children for the past ten years.

**Brenda Gooley** is the District Director at Middlebury Family Services, where they have been doing family time coaching for a year.

**Heather Leonard** is a Family Time Coach from Easter Seals at the Morrisville Family Services District office.

**A family member** who has participated in Family Time Coaching.

**MODERATOR: Cheryle Bilodeau**, LICSW, UVM / DCF Child Welfare Training Partnership

## Motivating Behavior Change and Effective Case Planning

Motivating true behavior change that results in effective case planning and implementation is a collaborative process guided by the youth or families. This workshop will introduce participants to motivational interviewing strategies and will provide an understanding of the stages of change. These evidence-based practice models are integrated together to direct a team in effective case planning strategies for youth and families.

**Stacy Jolles** is the Director of Youth Justice for the Department for Children and Families/ Family Services Division. She has been working statewide to enhance juvenile probation practice, detention, and treatment by implementing evidence-based practices and solutions.

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## The Challenges of Kinship Care – How Do We Make It Work?

Vermont's juvenile law places a new focus on kin as caregivers for children who are abused, neglected, or unmanageable. The statute gives priority to custody with kin over DCF custody at the Temporary Care hearing. But how is this working out in practice? What are the benefits, and what are the various roadblocks to kinship placements, especially at the point of the Temporary Care hearing? What procedures do we follow in considering kinship placements at the Temporary Care hearing? What *should* we do that we don't do now? In this workshop we will explore a variety of issues related to kin as caregivers and how these and other issues play out in real case scenarios.

### **PANELISTS:**

**Lynn Granger** is the Coordinator and one of the founding members of Vermont Kin As Parents (VKAP), and is a kinship caregiver for her grandson.

**Judge Walter Morris** served as Vermont's Defender General for three years prior to his appointment to the District Court bench in 1990. Judge Morris has presided in family and juvenile cases since his appointment to the bench, and has experienced a wide variety of kinship placement issues in his docket. He serves as a member of the faculty at the National Judicial College, and was a member of the Family Court Oversight Committee.

**Kathryn A. Piper**, J.D., M.Ed., was admitted to practice in Vermont in 1977. She has served as the Caledonia and Essex County Juvenile Defender since 1992. She served on the Permanency Planning Implementation Committee (PPIC) and on the committee that drafted the new Juvenile Justice Proceedings Act. She is currently a member of the Justice for Children Task Force and is chairing a subcommittee on subsidized kinship guardianships.

**Leslie Williams** is DCF's Family Services Division's liaison to foster families and Vermont Kin as Parents.

### **Moderator:**

**Hon. Amy M. Davenport**, Chief Administrative Judge for Vermont Trial Courts

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## Plenary Sessions



**3:00 PM**

### **INFORMATION IS POWER!**

This is Vermont's debut of "[Fostering Court Improvement](#)," a powerful tool that provides juvenile courts and other child advocates with data on safety, permanency, and well being outcomes for children in foster care and at risk of out-of-home placement. See a live demo of these online reports, which put the following information at the fingertips of child welfare advocates: average monthly removals from home, length of stay in foster care, time to reunification or adoption, months from TPR to adoption, and more. These reports and graphs can be viewed either by DCF Family Services district or by judicial region. Learn how this information can be used at the state level for guiding policy, or at local bench/bar meetings to drive discussions about local practice and influencing change.

***Christopher Church, J.D.**, is the Managing Attorney for the Supreme Court of Georgia's Committee on Justice for Children. He manages Georgia's Measures for Court program which involves local stakeholders creating action plans to achieve better outcomes for youth based on foster care and safety data. Mr. Church also holds a Master's degree in Mathematics.*

***Cindy Walcott** is Deputy Commissioner for Family Services, Vermont Department for Children and Families, where she oversees the state's child welfare and juvenile justice programs. She has 30 years experience in child welfare.*

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**3:45 PM**

### **EVALUATING THE JJPA: WHAT IS WORKING? WHAT IS NOT?**

We need your feedback! In this final session, you will get to use a miracle of modern technology known as an "instant response card" to tell us what you love and hate about revisions to the juvenile statute. Find out what your colleagues think as well. This will be a fast paced, highly interactive session designed to give us all a progress report based on what is really happening in the field.

***Hon. Amy M. Davenport**, Chief Administrative Judge for Vermont Trial Courts. Judge Davenport has been a superior court judge since 1990 and the Administrative Judge for Vermont Trial Courts since 2005. She served in the Vermont House of Representatives from 1984 to 1990 and is a member of the Vermont Justice for Children Task Force and a trustee of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.*

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## Additional Important Information

To register, [click here](#)

### Free of Charge

The conference is free of charge and limited to the first 250 people to register based on slots allotted for each participant group.

### Capitol Plaza Hotel & Conference Center (802) 223-5252

Parking: Please be advised that parking in the lot behind the Capitol Plaza is limited. Parking tags will be sent, via email for your vehicle at a later time. You will be asked to print the tag for your vehicle. No paper tags will be available. The tag MUST be printed in color and displayed in your windshield. Park in the spaces designated as Capitol Plaza parking. You may also park in the public lot adjacent to the Capitol Plaza lot. Do NOT park in any 30 minute metered spaces. The conference sponsor is not liable for any parking violations or penalties. If you arrive late and parking is not available behind the Capitol Plaza, please drive to the parking lot behind the [Department of Employment on Memorial Drive](#). The Capitol Plaza will shuttle conference attendees between the parking lot and the conference center during the day.

Additional parking is available (for a fee) in the City Center parking garage (enter East State St.) and behind City Hall (Main St.). Most parking areas have meters and require quarters. Shuttles are not available from these parking areas.

### Special Needs

The Capitol Plaza is ADA accessible. Lunch includes a vegetarian option. If you need special accommodations, please contact Kathy Rotondi at [Katherine.Rotondi@state.vt.us](mailto:Katherine.Rotondi@state.vt.us)

### Questions

For general questions about the conference, please contact Diane Chapin at [Diane.Chapin@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:Diane.Chapin@ahs.state.vt.us).

### Cancellations

If you cannot attend the conference, you must cancel by October 20 or you will be charged \$50 to cover food and conference costs. Please honor your commitment to attend or cancel your registration by October 20.

### Continuing Education

This program is approved for 5 hours of general CLE credits. Approval for CEU is pending.

### Registration

There is no paper registration for this conference. For questions related to the registration process, please contact Kathy Rotondi at [Katherine.Rotondi@state.vt.us](mailto:Katherine.Rotondi@state.vt.us).

You will receive confirmation of registration if you provide a valid email address on the registration form (see below for link).

Workshop space is limited. Before the conference, you will receive email confirmation of the workshops you have signed up for. Please take note of the workshops you plan to attend. An underlying theme of this year's conference is **Go Green**. We plan to minimize unnecessary waste, so we will be asking you to print and bring with you the conference and workshop materials you want and need. Links to the conference materials will be available after October 20th. Thanks very much for supporting this effort.

To register, [click here](#).

**Registration Deadline is October 13**

