

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN TASK FORCE

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PURPOSE

The Maine Justice for Children Task Force (“the Task Force”) is hereby continued as a collaborative, multidisciplinary Task Force to **improve safety, permanency, and well-being for children in the State of Maine child welfare system**. It is anticipated that the work of the Task Force will regularly occur in conjunction and collaboration with the work of the Executive and Legislative Branches, along with appropriate child welfare entities. This collaboration may include joint meetings designed to maximize the experience of the membership of each committee, prevent redundancy, and be respectful of members’ work schedules.

- Implementation of a virtual child welfare parent curriculum.
- Race and Equity Data Assessment Project.
- Continuing education for all system stakeholders.
- Interagency data sharing.
- Parent Attorney/GAL Recruitment and Retention.



STRATEGIC
PLAN

PARENT CURRICULUM MARCH 2024 UPDATE (AS OF 1/17/2024)

	Pre-CPS 101 (I2I)	Post-CPS 101 (I2I)
I understand how the child protective system works.	2.8	4.1
I understand who is on my child protective services team and what they each do.	3.1	4.3
I understand what I need to do to reunify my family.	3.3	4.1
I feel hopeful about my child protective services involvement.	3.0	3.7

PARENT CURRICULUM

- To date, there have been approximately 121 parent participants in the program.
- Since December:
 - Four parent sessions of CPS 101; and
 - One provider session with 31 providers in attendance.
- Maine Judicial Branch will provide funding for the program through June 2024 when OCFS funding will be available.
- Coordination with OCFS has begun to make the transition.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

- Meets throughout the year to plan the annual Maine Judicial Branch Child Welfare Conference.
- Attendees at the conferences include:
 - Parent's attorneys;
 - Guardians ad litem;
 - Assistant Attorney Generals;
 - DHHS caseworkers;
 - Judges; and
 - Other system partners.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

- Expanded invite list to include:
 - The Health and Human Services Committee;
 - The Government Oversight Committee; and
 - Court clerks.

MAINE JUDICIAL
BRANCH 2024 CHILD
WELFARE CONFERENCE

Child Welfare Litigation: Courtroom Strategies and Best Practices

- April 4th and 5th at Sunday River
- Focus on the life of a protective custody case, beginning with prevention and ending with youth services for those aging out of care.
- Litigation best practices for each court hearing including:
 - Summary Preliminary Hearings;
 - Jeopardy Hearings;
 - Contested Judicial Reviews;
 - Termination of Parental Rights; and
 - The GAL's role in contested hearings.
- See attached agenda.

MAINE JUDICIAL
BRANCH 2024 CHILD
WELFARE CONFERENCE

Youth Participation in Court

- Additional focus will be on incorporating youth voice in court proceedings.
- Presentations by a national expert as well as by local youth experts from the Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT)

MAINE JUDICIAL
BRANCH 2024 CHILD
WELFARE CONFERENCE

Participation:

- 275 participants for Thursday.
- 255 participants for Friday.

Presenters:

- Approximately 60 presenters
- Three national child welfare experts

**Continuing Legal Education
Credits:**

- 11.5 CLE/CPE/CJE credits
- 1 Ethics and Professionalism credit

PARENT ATTORNEY/GAL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

- Created upon recommendation from the 2022 Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel (MCWAP) Annual Report.
- Membership includes:
 - Office of the Attorney General;
 - Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services;
 - Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic;
 - Parent attorney;
 - Guardian ad litem;
 - Pine Tree Legal Assistance;
 - Maine Judicial Branch (administration and court clerk); and
 - Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence.

PARENT ATTORNEY/GAL
RECRUITMENT AND
RETENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

Mission: Identify system improvements to increase the recruitment and retention of Maine child welfare parent attorneys and guardians ad litem and implement change where possible.

Updates since December 2023:

- Furthered discussions about having a Child Welfare Expert designation in the State of Maine;
- Clarified and communicated appointment of GAL/parent attorney best practices; and
- Reviewed partial GAL survey results as a committee.

QUESTIONS?