



The Maine Judicial Branch Family Division Presents:
Child Welfare Litigation: Courtroom Strategies and Best Practices
April 4 and 5, 2024
Sunday River Resort, Newry, ME 04261

Thursday, April 4th

8:15-8:45: **Registration**

8:45-9:00: **Welcome and Introductions**

9:00-10:30: **Keynote: Economic and Concrete Supports & the Relationship with Child Welfare Involvement**

Clare Anderson, MSW, Senior Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

10:30-10:45: **Break**

10:45-11:45: **Breakout Sessions:**

1. Maine's Social Safety Net: Gaps and Supports for Families

Presenter: Cailley E. Bonti, Esq., Staff Attorney, Pine Tree Legal Assistance

Presenter: Oriana Farnham, Esq., Staff Attorney, Maine Equal Justice

2. Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan: Keeping Children Safe by Keeping Families Strong

Presenter: Mariette Aborn, Special Projects Manager for Child & Family Well-Being, Department of Health and Human Services

Presenter: Christine Theriault, Family First Prevention Services Manager, Office of Child and Family Services

Presenter: Melissa Hackett, Coordinator, Maine Child Welfare Action Network

3. Educational Rights of System Involved Youth

Presenter: Atlee Reilly, Esq., Legal Director, Disability Rights Maine

11:45-12:15: **Lunch** (gather and return to seat)

12:15-1:15: **Decoding Quality Hearings Data-Driven Insights**

Alicia Summers, Ph.D., Director, Data Savvy Consulting

1:15-1:30: **Break**

1:30-2:30: **Breakout Sessions:**

1. Investigative Findings, Administrative Hearing Process, and Superior Court Review of Final Agency Action

Moderator: Hunter Umphrey, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Presenter: Julian Richter, Esq., Family Defender

*Presenter: Brianna Gutierrez, Communication and Compliance Manager
Office of Child and Family Services*

Panelist: Joseph Pickering Esq., Chief Administrative Hearing Officer, Department of Health and Human Services

2. Maine Quality Hearing Pilot Project

Moderator: Alicia Summers, Ph.D., Director, Data Savvy Consulting

Panelist: Hon. Charles Dow, Judge, Maine District Court



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Panelist: Matthew Kanwit, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Panelist: Charles Reeves, Esq., Parent Attorney

Panelist: Wendy Hatch, Esq., Guardian ad Litem

3. Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

*Presenter: Maggie Loeffelholz (she/her), Immigrant Children's Project Attorney,
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)*

Presenter: Christopher Northrop, Professor, University of Maine School of Law

2:30-2:45: **Break**

2:45-3:45: **Breakout Sessions:**

1. Role of Assessments in Meeting the Purposes of the Juvenile Code and the Role of the JCCO

*Moderator: Jill Ward, Director, Center for Youth Policy & Law, University of
Maine School of Law*

Panelist: William (Bill) Barter, Ph.D. (he/him)

Panelist: Elise Magnuson, Psy.D., LCSW

*Panelist: Sarah Branch, Visiting Professor of Law, Director of the Youth Justice
Clinic, University of Maine School of Law*

Panelist: Tanya Pierson, Esq., Assistant District Attorney;

*Panelist: Steve Labonte, Regional Correctional Administrator, MDOC Juvenile
Community Corrections*

2. Preserving the Record for Appeal and Appellate Process

Presenter: Brittany Sawyer, Esq., Holmes Legal Group

Presenter: Hunter Umphrey, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

3. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA): Federal and Maine

Presenter: Xi Chen, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

3:45-4:45 Ethics: Anybody Out There? Fulfilling Ethical Duties in Cases with Unknown or Missing Parents

Moderator: Zack Paakkonen, Esq.,

Panelist: Lise Wagner, Esq., Assistant Attorney General;

Panelist: Chelsea Peters, Esq.



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Friday, April 5th

- 7:30-8:15 **Registration**
- 8:15-8:30 **Welcome and Introduction**
- 8:30-9:30 **A Seat at the Table: Enhancing Youth Participation in Court**
Presenter: Natalece Washington, JD, CWLS, National Association for Counsel for Children
Presenter: Mackenzie Fecteau, YLAT
- 9:30-10:00 **Break**
- 10:00-11:00 **Breakout Sessions**
1. **Court-Ordered Diagnostic and Psychological Evaluations**
Presenter: William (Bill) Barter, Ph.D. (he/him)
Presenter: Elise Magnuson, Psy.D., LCSW
 2. **The Role of a Guardian ad Litem at Contested Hearings**
Moderator: Kaela Scott, Esq., GAL Services Coordinator, Maine Judicial Branch
Panelist: Hon. Erika Bristol, Judge, Maine District Court
Panelist: Julie-Anne Blanchard, Esq., Assistant Attorney General
Panelist: Chelsea Peters, Esq., Guardian ad Litem
Panelist: Sheila Cook, Esq., Guardian ad Litem
 3. **Championing the Potential of Foster Youth as They Enter Adulthood: Building the Support, Resources, and Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care as They Navigate the Challenges of Transitioning to Adulthood and Independence**
Panelist: Melissa Allen, Policy Associate, Youth and Community Engagement Team, Catherine Cutler Institute at the University of Southern Maine;
Panelist: Tom Cook, Extended Care Social Worker, Office of Child and Family Services, DHHS
Panelist: Colton Almodovar, Youth Transition Specialist, OCFS
Panelist: Daniel Sheehan, M.S, Transition Liaison Children's to Adult Services, OCFS and OADS
Panelist: Leah Cleland, Alumni Navigator, Youth and Community Engagement Team, USM
Panelist: Rewn Herald, Youth Leadership Advisory Team, USM
Panelist: Jayden Jenkins, Youth Leadership Advisory Team, USM
- 11:00-12:00 **Summary Preliminary Hearing Litigation Best Practices**
Moderator: Hunter Umphrey, Esq., Assistant Attorney General
Panelist: Lise Wagner, Esq., Assistant Attorney General
Panelist: Brittany Sawyer, Esq., Parent Attorney
Panelist: Andrew Bloom, Esq., Guardian ad Litem
Panelist: Hon. Michael Duddy, Judge, Maine District Court
- 12:00-12:30 **Lunch** (gather and return to seat)



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12:30-1:30 Jeopardy Litigation Best Practices

Moderator: Hunter Umphrey, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Panelist: Karen Dostaler, Assistant Attorney General

Panelist: Wendy Hatch, Esq., Parent Attorney

Panelist: Cassie Rogers, Esq., Guardian ad Litem

Panelist: Hon. Charles Dow, Judge, Maine District Court

1:30-1:45. Break

1:45-2:45 Breakout Sessions

1. Nothing About Us, Without Us: Strategies That Will Support Elevating Youth Voice in the Courtroom

Moderator: Shannon Saxby, LMSW, Youth and Community Engagement Team, USM

Presenter: Lily Maass, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Youth and Community Engagement Team, USM

Presenter: Huyanna Clearwater, Alumni Navigator, Youth and Community Engagement Team, USM

Presenter: Mackenzie Fecteau, Ambassador, Youth Leadership Advisory Team, USM

Presenter: Alicia Bissonette, Youth Leadership Advisory Team, USM

2. Contested Judicial Review Best Practices

Moderator: Hunter Umphrey, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Panelist: Julie-Anne Blanchard, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Panelist: Chelsea Peters, Esq., Parent Attorney

Panelist: Ben Fowler, Esq., Guardian ad Litem

Panelist: Hon. Tammy Ham-Thompson, Judge, Maine District Court

2:45-3:00 Break

3:00-4:00 Termination of Parental Rights Litigation Best Practices

Moderator: Hunter Umphrey, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Panelist: Heidi Silver, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Panelist: Julian Richter, Esq., Family Defender

Panelist: Taylor Kilgore, Esq., Guardian ad Litem

Panelist: Hon. Amy Faircloth, Judge, Maine District Court