



# Colorado Office of the Child's Representative

1300 Broadway Ste 320, Denver 80203 | P (303) 860-1517 | F (303) 860-1735 | www.coloradochildrep.org

## Fall 2017 Newsletter

### Notes from the Executive Director

Recently, I ran into Acting State Court Administrator Chris Ryan who mentioned that, although the appellate caseload is down across the state, child welfare and delinquency cases have seen a marked increase in appellate activity. This newsletter provides a great summary of the cases that are on appeal. Currently, the Colorado Supreme Court is considering whether the denial of an adjudication in a dependency and neglect action is a final appealable order and whether foster parents who have intervened in a dependency action have standing to appeal a trial court's order denying termination. These are critically important issues for children, and OCR is weighing in as *amicus* on those cases. For a synopsis of all of the issues currently pending before both the Colorado Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, please read the case summaries on page four. And please remember that if you receive a Notice of Appeal, you can reach out to our appellate attorneys directly for help (see our [Litigation Support List](#)) or contact your OCR staff attorney.

Page two of this issue also contains some of the comments we have received about OCR attorneys during our FY16-17 evaluation process. Those comments come directly from young people, caregivers and parents. As busy

practitioners, you may not always have the chance to really appreciate the impact you have on families in your communities, so please do take a few minutes to read these comments. My favorite this year was from a young person who said, "She took me to court and she bragged about me. I thought that was so great. Someone actually sees the good in me!"

Thank you for all you do to see the good in kids who are in tough circumstances—your belief in the potential of the kids whose interests you represent is a critical element in your advocacy. The work you do truly makes a difference to each child and each community. Have a wonderful Fall and a Happy Thanksgiving! ♦



*Linda Weinerman*

Linda Weinerman, Executive Director



### Inside This Issue:

PDF readers: Click on a subject to jump to that page.

- ♦ [Quotes from Children, Caregivers, and Parents about OCR Attorneys](#) ..... 2
- ♦ [Meet an OCR Attorney: Kelley Southerland](#) ..... 3
- ♦ [Fall Legal Review](#)..... 4
- ♦ [What's New at OCR?](#) ..... 5
  - Social Services Professionals ..... 5
  - Litigation Toolkit..... 5
  - Mentoring ..... 5
  - Farewell Bob Smith! ..... 5
- ♦ [Highlights from the General Assembly Report](#) ..... 6
- ♦ [Recent News and Resources](#) ..... 7
- ♦ [Financial Report](#)..... 8
- ♦ [Welcome New Staff Attorney Ashley Chase](#) ..... 8
- ♦ [Highlights from OCR's Annual Satisfaction Survey](#)..... 9
- ♦ [Engaging and Empowering Youth Project](#) ..... 10

## Thank You, OCR Attorneys!

Feedback about OCR Attorneys from Children, Caregivers, and Parents from the 2017 Evaluations

- ▶ “She really just advocated for me when I didn’t feel like I had the power to advocate for myself.” – Youth
- ▶ “I just trust her because her word is gold. When she says she’s going to do something, she gets it done.” – Youth
- ▶ “I think [my GAL] was a wonderful GAL. Out of my whole entire team, he was one of the people that stuck by me the most. He made sure my life was what it was supposed to be regardless of who was in my life. He pushed me to do better in school. He was basically like a father figure to me.” - Youth
- ▶ “She’s very professional and understanding as well. I think she wants to hear you out and addresses what your concerns might be. I felt that through this whole thing. These cases are very complicated. I had a lot of questions about what was happening. She did a good job helping me understand the process.” - Caregiver
- ▶ “He was able to talk to the children at their level and understanding and at their trauma level. That’s a big deal. These kids are very traumatized. He sounds amazing because he is.” – Caregiver
- ▶ “[The GAL] was always very supportive. Her focus was about what was best for the child. But she did that in a sensitive way that helped us preserve our family.” - Caregiver
- ▶ “She’s like the only person in the entire case that I felt actually heard me and the child. I feel like she’s the reason that the minor child has a chance in life.” - Parent
- ▶ “He treats me with the utmost respect. We did go through bumps in our journey. So as a dad I had a different agenda but [the GAL] would always bring it back to what is best for my son, so we could find common ground.” – Parent
- ▶ “We were in contact a lot. There seemed to be a lot of problems and situations that were unique, not everyone had training for. It seems like she was the only person who knew. She had the information to do the right thing. She always advocated for my daughter in ways that I cannot explain.” - Parent ♦



## Meet an OCR Attorney

Each quarter, the OCR features an attorney in our newsletter and on our website. Learn about the individuals who make OCR's mission a reality through their passion, skill, and dedication to Colorado's kids!



**Kelley Southerland practices as a Guardian ad Litem in the 2nd Judicial District (Denver).**

► **Why did you choose to practice child welfare law?** I was accepted into a late-opening slot in the Children's Legal Advocacy Clinic at DU in my third year of law school. I did not know it at the time, but that clinic launched my legal career in child welfare and service to families. I remember sitting in the first few classes of the clinic thinking, "This is it. I've been looking for this work." I have never looked back. From the beginning, the work has felt challenging and meaningful. As time goes on, I feel more and more passionate about the work we do in service to children and families. I'm serving my community in this work, and it is an honor to choose this work each day.

► **What has been the most rewarding moment for you while working with children and families in the dependency and neglect system?** Something rewarding happens almost every day in this work, so identifying one standout moment is really impossible. It is very rewarding to watch older youth exit the system and forge their own ways very successfully with skills they learned during their case. The most successful youth I have worked with secured a tremendous scholarship for himself and created a permanent connection with the family that started out fostering him. He has beat every odd and is a gift to his created family and his community. We will be seeing more of him! Another standout moment was securing the delivery of a child that family had been hiding and arranging his delivery to safety, where he was eventually adopted.

► **Describe a challenge you face doing this work and your strategies to overcome it.** The biggest challenge I face continually is knowing the situation for children may not remain as we leave it. The risk we face in these cases that children will face harm again is real. I struggle balancing the need to send children home knowing the situation may be tenuous, at best, with making sure children's rights to be raised in their families are strongly protected. Knowing for sure when the risk you identify is acceptable vs. unacceptable is impossible. You have to get very comfortable with uncertainty, and that is challenging.

► **What advice do you have for an attorney who is new to child welfare law?** My advice for an attorney starting out is to seek all the mentoring and support you can. We receive great training, but the training cannot completely prepare you for the issues that come up every day in this work. Each case is so different and presents its own sets of challenges that it is impossible to know how to handle all issues that arise. Having a mentor you can call is key to building your skill set and confidence.

On a personal level, make sure you engage in simple pleasures and self-care often. This work is emotional and can be very difficult personally. Keep your life in balance to bring your best to your work.

► **What drives you to continue in this line of work and do you have any advice for a seasoned attorney?** I have a passion for this work that I cannot explain, and it keeps me going. I get deep satisfaction from the work we do. No two days are the same. We do difficult law combined with advanced knowledge of trauma, addiction, and attachment issues. We appear in court and play on swing sets. We are in homes and courtrooms, often all on the same day. We travel this state and make connections with service providers and individuals from every area of the community. This work has truly made me feel like a citizen of my community and my state in ways I envision few jobs can. The community of seasoned attorneys in this work is also very supportive. My advice for seasoned attorneys is to stay engaged with the changes in the field and to keep learning about continually-developing litigation strategies. I'd also say the same thing about self-care to seasoned attorneys. The risk of burnout and weariness is high. Practicing good self-care is key to longevity and effectiveness.

► **Share a litigation strategy or case example when you were successful despite opposition from other parties to the case.** My biggest litigation strategy is building understanding through communication and collaboration. Collaboration can lead to moving the case forward very successfully. You build strong relationships and avenues of communication. Communication throughout the case often keeps contested litigation at bay for all the right reasons. However, if you have communicated effectively throughout a case, and still need to litigate, you have the information you need from hard work you did during the case. When you get to the point where litigation is necessary, typically all parties understand why litigation is now necessary and how you got there. Litigation is so much more effective when parties feel they have had a say in the process. ♦



Nominate, share your own story, and view our archive on our [Meet an OCR Attorney page online!](#)

# Fall Legal Review

Summaries of new cases and legislation brought to you by OCR's Staff Attorneys

## ▶▶ Contents:

1. Colorado Supreme Court..... Page 4
2. Colorado Court of Appeals..... Page 4

### ■ 1. Colorado Supreme Court

***People in Interest B.M.-M., 16SC970.*** Whether a denial of an adjudication in a dependency and neglect action is a final order for the purposes of appeal. **OCR filed an *amicus* brief in this matter.**

***C.W.B., Jr. v. A.S. and J.S., 17SC412.*** Whether foster parents who have intervened in a dependency and neglect action have standing to appeal a trial court's grant or denial of a motion for termination of the parent-child relationship. Whether foster parents who have intervened in a dependency and neglect action can represent the best interests of the child on appeal. **OCR filed an *amicus* brief in this matter.**

***People in Interest of D.Z.B., 17SC250.*** Whether the court of appeals erred in concluding that petitioner does not have standing to appeal a juvenile court's decision concerning pre-adjudication placement in a delinquency case.

***People in Interest of N.L.W., 16SC731.*** Whether failure to enter a written order adjudicating a child dependent or neglected under section 19-3-505(7)(a), C.R.S. (2016), after accepting a parent's admission to the allegations, divests the juvenile court of its subject matter jurisdiction to order a termination of the parent-child relationship.

***People in Interest of E.M., 16SC287.*** Whether a juvenile court must proceed under section 19-5-105, C.R.S. (2015), or section 19-3-604, C.R.S. (2015), when terminating the parent-child legal relationship of the non-relinquishing parent after one parent decides to relinquish his or her parental rights to a child subject to pending dependency and neglect proceedings.

***People v. Ybanez, 14SC190.*** This case addresses, among other issues, 1) Whether a child charged as an adult with first-degree murder, whose parent is a victim of the crime and a prosecution witness, is entitled to a guardian *ad litem* to assist with his defense and to advise him regarding the waiver of his constitutional trial rights; and 2) Whether the court of appeals properly applied plain error review to the defendant's claim that a guardian *ad litem* should have been appointed, when there was no objection at trial or the initial Crim. P. 35(c) motion. **OCR filed an *amicus* brief in this matter.**



### ■ 2. Colorado Court of Appeals

***People in Interest of C.S., 2017COA96*** (July 13, 2017). This case involves a respondent father's assertion that the "juvenile court denied him a fundamentally fair proceeding when it dismissed the dependency and neglect case without also ensuring the expungement of the administrative child abuse finding that led to [its] filing." The Weld County Department of Human Services filed a D&N petition based on injuries sustained by B.F., then four months old, while in father's care. Father denied the allegations in the petition and requested a jury trial. Mother entered a no-fault admission and entered a deferred adjudication. Prior to the trial, the Department moved to allow mother to withdraw her plea and to dismiss the petition as to both mother and father. Father stated he would agree to the dismissal of the petition, but requested that the court make clear the dismissal was based on the Department's determination that it could not proceed with the evidence. Father contended that under § 19-3-505(6), the Department would then be obligated to expunge its administrative findings regarding father. As an E.M.T., father was concerned about these findings. The Department argued that it was not required to proceed with the case or to stipulate to any findings, and the Court dismissed the proceeding without any such findings.

The Court of Appeals dismisses father's appeal, holding that the juvenile court did not issue a final judgment, decree, or order as defined by § 19-1-109(2)(b) and (c). The Court of Appeals also analyzes the Children's Code provisions relating to expungement, § 19-3-505(6) and 19-3-313.5(3)(f), concluding that these provisions do not authorize the juvenile court "to enter any judgment, decree, or order involving the expungement of administrative findings of dependency and neglect." According to the Court of Appeals, § 19-3-505(6) requires a juvenile court that has found the allegations of the petition are not supported by a preponderance of the evidence to inform the respondent of the department's expungement requirement; this is the extent of the juvenile court's role. ♦



# What's New This Fall at the OCR?

## Social Service Professionals

OCR has contracted with Licensed Professional Counselor Stacey Hoksbergen to develop a network of social service professionals to support GALs with their independent investigation and advocacy, and to provide case consultation to attorneys while she is developing the network. OCR's goal is to start this project as a pilot in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> judicial districts, then evaluate it as a model for supporting GALs in other judicial districts. During the pilot, **Stacey will also hold case staffing/consultation meetings accessible to all GALs.** ♦

## Mentoring

OCR released a new and improved mentoring program for FY 17-18, designed to ensure that every new/newer GAL in Colorado has a positive transition into GAL work. OCR recruited 19 veteran attorneys to serve as mentors. Mentors are paid the hourly contract rate for time spent mentoring. Thanks to all the mentors! If you would like to become a mentor, please contact [info@coloradochildrep.org](mailto:info@coloradochildrep.org). ♦



## Litigation Toolkit

OCR recently released a new and improved Litigation Toolkit (formerly known as the Motions Bank) at [www.coloradochildrep.org/attorney-center/litigation-toolkit/](http://www.coloradochildrep.org/attorney-center/litigation-toolkit/). The Toolkit contains litigation forms such as sample motions and orders, as well as litigation resources such as checklists and sample testimony. You can search the documents using key words and/or categories (such as the titles of the GRID chapters and fact sheets). We hope you find the Toolkit useful in your everyday practice. The nine forms and five resources currently housed in the Toolkit are just the beginning; we plan to update it on an ongoing basis. If you have forms or resources you would like to share, please forward them to Cara Nord at [caranord@coloradochildrep.org](mailto:caranord@coloradochildrep.org). ♦

## Farewell Bob Smith!

As he approaches his 79th birthday, Attorney and Mediator **Bob Smith** has decided to retire. Bob has been a CFI, then CLR, through OCR since OCR's creation. Bob has been a resource to DR practitioners across the state via his participation in trainings and contributions to the OCR listserv. He will be sorely missed. We wish him the very best. ♦



# Highlights from OCR's Annual Report to the General Assembly (Sept. 2017)

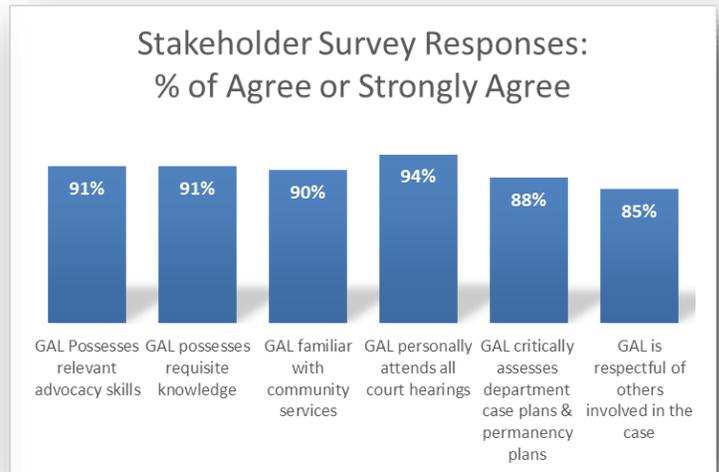
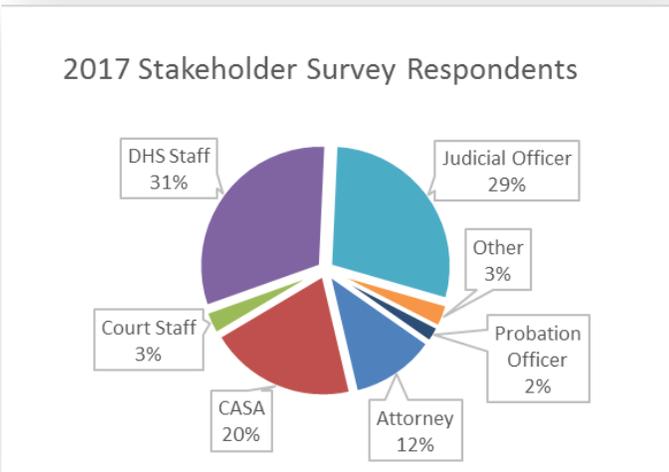
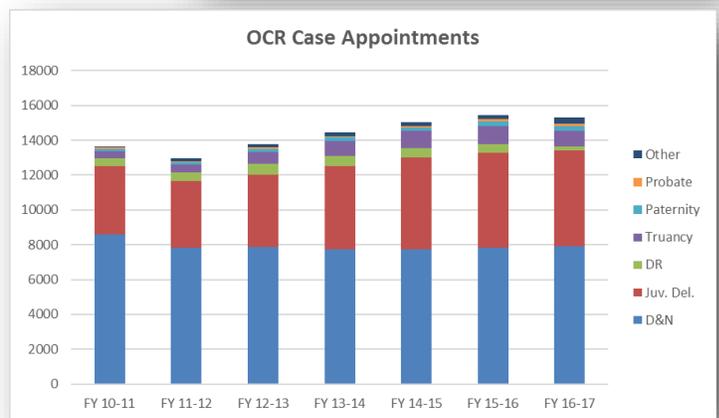
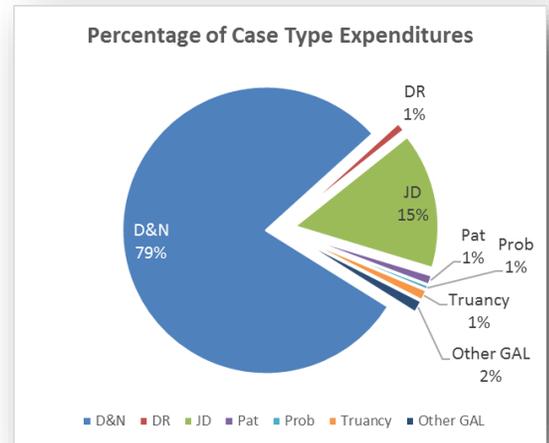
OCR's annual report to the General Assembly (GA) was submitted on September 1, 2017. The General Assembly report is one of several reports and documents OCR files with the General Assembly throughout the year. In addition to explaining the difficult work you do and the value of that work, the GA Report explains the functioning of the OCR and the ways OCR spends taxpayer dollars—see excerpts below. Find the full report at [goo.gl/oLnoeb](http://goo.gl/oLnoeb).

OCR spends 5% of its budget on central administration. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of OCR's attorney services expenditures is paid in dependency and neglect cases. OCR contracts with approximately 250 attorneys skilled in juvenile law throughout the state and in every judicial district to provide mandated legal services. The contract entities are small businesses, including sole practitioners and law firms.

The OCR saw an overall decrease in appointments paid in FY 16-17 from the previous fiscal year. However, this fiscal year's appointments still amount to an 18% increase over FY 11-12. The breakdown of appointments for each case type over the last seven fiscal years is shown in the "OCR Case Appointments" chart.

The OCR experienced a 1.2% increase in D&N case appointments and an increase in hours billed in D&N cases in FY 16-17 as compared to the previous fiscal year. The average cost per dependency and neglect case was \$2,031 in FY 16-17, an increase of \$150 per case from FY 15-16. D&N expenditures account for 79% of attorney expenditures. FY 16-17 continued the trend of increased GAL appointments in Juvenile Delinquency (JD) matters. JD appointments rose 0.6% and the average cost per JD matter increased by \$11 over FY 15-16, amounting to \$569 per case.

As part of its yearly contracting and verifications process in FY17, OCR received 209 renewal applications/attorney verifications and 105 new applications. OCR added 28 new contractors in July of 2017. OCR conducted 448 courtroom observations involving 94 attorneys and 675 children/youth and conducted 247 reference interviews concerning 64 attorneys. OCR received 1,197 "Stakeholder Survey" responses concerning 223 attorneys; 334 were from judicial officers. Key survey outcomes are shown in the charts below. ♦



## Recent News & Resources



- **Adoption Assistance by State** ([goo.gl/T7Zt6c](http://goo.gl/T7Zt6c)) by the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (AAICAMA). This website permits the user to select (1) a specific state to view the state's answers to 13 questions regarding state policies on adoption assistance and post-adoption services (e.g., what are the eligibility criteria for state-funded adoption assistance, when may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin, what types of postadoption services are available, and what mental health services are provided); or (2) one of the 13 questions to see how the question is addressed across all states.
- **Colorado Court of Appeals policy on citation and file structure** ([tinyurl.com/yb8ttuzz](http://tinyurl.com/yb8ttuzz)). The citation policy applies to records filed after July 1, 2017, while the file policy went into effect August 4, 2017.
- **Colorado Division of Child Welfare (DCW) memo addressing DCW face-to-face contacts** between October 2015 and September 2016 with children in out of home care ([tinyurl.com/yb9jtzeb](http://tinyurl.com/yb9jtzeb)). This report contains county and statewide data, reports a 94.9% compliance rate, and indicates the need to reach 95% to avoid a fiscal sanction.
- The following **judicial bench cards** include information by age group regarding appropriate developmental milestones and questions to ask children:

  - *Engaging Young Children (Ages 0-12 Mo) in the Courtroom* ([tinyurl.com/ycn8yf9b](http://tinyurl.com/ycn8yf9b))
  - *Engaging Toddlers (ages 1-3) & Preschoolers (Ages 3-5) in the Courtroom* ([tinyurl.com/ybdo99kp](http://tinyurl.com/ybdo99kp))
  - *Engaging School-Age Children (Ages 5-11) in the Courtroom* ([tinyurl.com/ybng44rq](http://tinyurl.com/ybng44rq))
  - *Engaging Adolescents (Ages 12-15) in the Courtroom* ([tinyurl.com/ydyjgdrm](http://tinyurl.com/ydyjgdrm))
  - *Engaging Older Adolescents (Ages 16+) in the Courtroom* ([tinyurl.com/y9ko9vhy](http://tinyurl.com/y9ko9vhy))
- **Grandfamilies.org** is a national legal resource supporting grandfamilies as a collaboration of the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, Generations United, and Casey Family Programs. Its home page permits the user to search laws, legal resources, and publications via keyword or topical searches (e.g., adoption, education, financial assistance, foster care licensing, housing, healthcare, and subsidized guardianship).
- **Handbook on Questioning Children: A Linguistic Perspective** ([tinyurl.com/ybgzev2j](http://tinyurl.com/ybgzev2j)). This handbook, published by the American Bar Association, applies linguistics to the critical task of communicating accurately with children in the legal system. Its numerous appendices include a checklist for interviewing children, suggestions for questioning children, sentence-building principles for talking to children, and the like.
- **Human Trafficking and Child Welfare: A Guide for Child Welfare Agencies** ([tinyurl.com/y876qdzy](http://tinyurl.com/y876qdzy)). Sponsored by the Child Welfare Information Gateway, this guide provides background information regarding relevant federal legislation and initiatives for—and strategies to address—trafficking of children.
- **The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change** ([tinyurl.com/y9etefcz](http://tinyurl.com/y9etefcz)). This report of the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being indicates that the legal profession is at a tipping point due to poor lawyer well-being, which cannot support a profession dedicated to client service and dependent on the public trust. Fortunately, the report also provides five specific recommendations and action plans for building a more positive future.

(Continued on page 8)

## Financial Report

Thank you for entering your end-of-year billing by the July deadline. OCR closed FY 2017 with approximately \$371,000 remaining, which reverted to the state's general fund. While we are still early in FY 2018, OCR expects to remain within its yearly budget. OCR has started developing its FY 2019 budget request, which must be submitted to the Joint Budget Committee by November 1, 2017.

Due to the many difficulties OCR and its contractors were having with CARES, OCR requested funds from the General Assembly to develop a new case management and billing system as part of our FY 2017-18 budget request. OCR obtained those funds in July 2017. OCR completed a request for proposals, which resulted in a contract with software development firm Tempus Nova. We learned valuable lessons through the development of CARES, but want to improve the system. Development and testing is expected to occur throughout the current fiscal year, with an anticipated implementation date of July 1, 2018. We will be seeking contractor input throughout this process to be sure the system meets your needs and is truly user-friendly. ♦

## Recent News & Resources

(Continued from page 7)



- ***Leading the Way: Colorado Makes Kinship Care a Priority for Kids in Foster Care*** ([tinyurl.com/ybzkhlqu](http://tinyurl.com/ybzkhlqu)). This Annie E. Casey Foundation press release discusses Colorado's trend towards placing children in kinship care rather than residential facilities.
- ***The Impact of Marijuana Legalization on Youth & the Need for State Legislation on Marijuana-Specific Instruction in K-12 Schools*** ([tinyurl.com/yb97knfq](http://tinyurl.com/yb97knfq)). This law review article argues that states that legalize marijuana have a duty to amend their K-12 public school instructional statutes to provide for substantial marijuana education.
- ***Reducing Youth Arrests Keeps Kids Healthy and Successful Fact Sheet*** ([tinyurl.com/yayxomg6](http://tinyurl.com/yayxomg6)). This fact sheet released by Human Impact Partners provides statistics regarding youth arrests and information regarding the many effects of youth arrests, then concludes with recommendations to decrease the frequency and/or trauma associated with youth arrests.
- ***Supporting and Promoting Youth Court Attendance*** ([tinyurl.com/OCRYouthCourt](http://tinyurl.com/OCRYouthCourt)) and ***Youth in Court Mythbusters*** ([tinyurl.com/OCRMythbusters](http://tinyurl.com/OCRMythbusters)). These OCR infographic resources provide statistics regarding—and practical solutions to arguments against—youth court attendance.
- ***What Happens to Me Now: Handbook for Colorado Children Who Are Not Living at Home*** ([tinyurl.com/y7x6umsz](http://tinyurl.com/y7x6umsz), scroll down to "Handbooks and Resources"). These handbooks explain the dependency and neglect process in versions geared towards children ages 3-7, 7-12, and 13-18; all are available in both English and Spanish. ♦



## New Staff Attorney & Legislative Liaison

**A**shley Chase recently joined OCR as a Staff Attorney and Legislative Liaison. Ashley attended the University of Colorado School of Law, where she participated in the Juvenile Law Clinic. After completing an externship with the Honorable J. Robert Lowenbach in the 19th judicial district, Ashley began working in Weld County in family law and as a guardian *ad litem*. During her 10 years in Weld County, Ashley participated in all aspects of litigation and appeals, worked in Family Treatment Court, and was a member of the 19th Judicial District Best Practices Team. Ashley has led child welfare presentations and trainings across Colorado. Welcome aboard, Ashley!

Please remember that your OCR Staff Attorney Liaison is available to provide assistance. The name of your liaison can be found on the printout available at [tinyurl.com/yaurf7bb](http://tinyurl.com/yaurf7bb). ♦

## Highlights from OCR's Annual Attorney Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to everyone who responded to the **OCR Attorney Satisfaction Survey** this summer. Your feedback is an incredible resource to the OCR and helps guide our practices and priorities. The OCR received 108 responses from attorneys in all 22 judicial districts. Below are some of the results.



### Top Three Preferred Methods to Receive Case Law and Other Updates:

- ➔ Regularly-scheduled email bulletins
- ➔ PDFs by email (like this newsletter)
- ➔ Webinars

79% of respondents reported that the number of attorneys on the pick-up list in their jurisdiction is adequate. 71% reported having a sufficient number of cases to sustain the practice they want.



### Top Five Respondent Case Types and Roles:

- 1 D&N cases as GAL
- 2 Delinquency cases as GAL
- 3 D&N cases as counsel for the child
- 4 DR cases as CLR
- 5 Truancy cases as GAL



### Top Five Most Valuable Current OCR Resources:

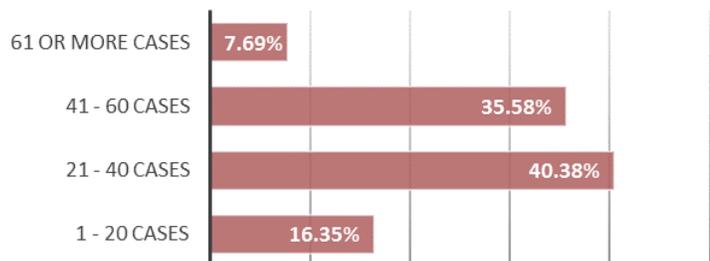


- 1 [GRID book](#)
- 2 [Website](#)
- 3 [Email listserv](#)
- 4 [Newsletter](#)
- 5 [Litigation Toolkit](#)

### Top Five OCR Resources with Highest Potential Value:

- 1 [Litigation Toolkit](#)
- 2 [GRID book](#)
- 3 [Email listserv and its archives](#) (tied)
- 4 [Litigation Support List](#)
- 5 [Website](#)

### How many OCR cases do you feel you can competently handle at one time?



Most respondents reported a preference for receiving **OCR communications as they become available**, instead of weekly, every two weeks, monthly, or quarterly.

## Engaging and Empowering Youth Project

The commentary to Chief Justice Directive 04-06(V)(d)(1) states, "When ascertaining the child's position regarding issues before the court, the GAL shall endeavor to maximize the child's involvement in court proceedings, when consistent with the child's best interests, by discussing the court process, ascertaining whether the child wishes to appear in court and identifying and advocating for the elimination of barriers to the child's attendance at court. The GAL should conduct a post-hearing follow up with the child regarding the outcome of the hearing and, if applicable, the child's experience at the hearing."

Consistent with this commentary, two of OCR's performance goals for fiscal years 2017-20 are to (a) provide children a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective attorney services and advocacy; and (b) ensure children's voices and interests are paramount in the development of policy, law, and practice.

In furtherance of the above CJD and goals, OCR has created an **Engaging and Empowering Youth (E&EY) project**. The project specifically aims to assist GAL efforts in meeting the above CJD requirements and recommendations, and to obtain youth feedback regarding GALs and the courts. OCR's actions through this project have included:

- ✓ leading E&EY presentations for new and experienced attorneys;
- ✓ drafting and distributing a bill of rights for youth with D&N cases;
- ✓ drafting and distributing a list of safeguards for youth placed in foster care; and
- ✓ creating, disseminating, and receiving responses from a youth survey.

If you have any E&EY comments, needs, or recommendations, please contact Cara Nord at [caranord@coloradochildrep.org](mailto:caranord@coloradochildrep.org). ♦



## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of the Office of the Child's Representative (OCR) is to provide competent and effective legal representation to Colorado's children involved in the court system because they have been abused and neglected, impacted by high conflict parenting time disputes, or charged with delinquent acts and without a parent able to provide relevant information to the court or protect their best interests during the proceedings.*

### OCR Board of Directors

(Former) Senator Al White (Chair), Mark Ferrandino, Mary Ann Liston, Donald Moseley, Kelvin Nicholson, Gwen Schooley, Barbara Shaklee, Maria Valdez, Marc Winokur, Victoria Shuler (Youth Member)

### OCR Staff

<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Linda Weinerman
<b>DEPUTY DIRECTOR</b>	Sheri Danz
<b>CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER</b>	Mark Teska
<b>STAFF ATTORNEY &amp; LEGISLATIVE LIAISON</b>	Ashley Chase
<b>STAFF ATTORNEY</b>	Cara Nord
<b>TRAINING COORDINATOR</b>	Melinda Taylor
<b>ACCOUNTANT</b>	Katie Irwin
<b>ATTORNEY REIMBURSEMENT &amp; HR MGR</b>	Melanie Jannicelli
<b>INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGER</b>	Rebecca Garrison

