



Kids Matter

Child Protection and Advocacy Law Section

Summer 2025

From the Chair

By: Laurie M. Thomas Williams

Chair, Child Protection & Advocacy Section



to protecting and advocating for Georgia's children and families.

Membership and Governance

As of this writing, we have 553 active members. We hit an all-time high of 560 members last Bar year, a testament to your dedication and the value of this community. As you complete your State Bar renewals, please double-check that you've rejoined the Child Protection & Advocacy Section and encourage your colleagues to do the same. Every renewal helps us fund scholarships, programming, and outreach to advance child welfare across Georgia.

Following our recent elections, I continue to serve as Chair, with Tonya Boga as Vice Chair, Randee Waldman as Treasurer, and Jill Roth as Secretary. The Executive Committee is already working hard to ensure a strong year ahead.

CLE and Training Initiatives

We are actively planning several CLE programs and training opportunities for the 2025–2026 Bar year. Be on the lookout for an email blast with announcements and registration details coming soon. We hope you'll join us and invite colleagues in the field to participate.

Outreach

We were proud to support the Youth and Law Summit, held on April 19, 2025, themed "The Power of CommYOUity – I Am Because We Are... Stronger When We CommYOUinate Respectfully and Responsibly." CPAS presented an interactive session on respectful and responsible communication, with a focus on identifying and understanding terroristic threats, recent changes in the law, and the real-world impact of our words. The program was well received, and the youth were highly engaged throughout the discussion. A special thank you to Quintin Lewis for co-presenting with me and to Jill Roth for managing our resource table, which featured materials from GA Appleseed and other community partners.

In addition, CPAS proudly sponsored the 23rd Annual GAWL Girl Scout Project, where girls participated in a mock trial and engaged with judges and legal professionals in a hands-on courtroom experience. I had the privilege of serving on the legal careers panel alongside several inspiring women in our field. Check out the newsletter for more details and photos from this impactful event.

Judge Willie Lovett Jr. Award

We were honored to present the Judge Willie Lovett Jr. Award at the State Bar Annual Meeting this June. This award continues to recognize and celebrate outstanding service in the child welfare system and community. Congratulations to this year's recipient, Talia Johnson Nurse, for her unwavering commitment to justice and the well-being of Georgia's children.

A heartfelt thank you to the Judge Lovett Award Committee for ensuring another successful presentation of this meaningful honor. Check out the newsletter for photos and more highlights from the event.

Legislative and Policy Work

Our Legislative Committee is preparing an article to update members on the legislative process and recent activity. We welcome ideas from members for policy priorities in the next Bar year.

Get Involved – Committee Sign-Up Now Open

If you're looking for a way to get more involved in our Section's efforts, we welcome you to join a committee—whether it's CLE planning, outreach programming, youth engagement, legislation, or the newsletter committee. We especially need help with expanding outreach across the state. Use this form to sign up and let us know your interests: <https://forms.gle/BkgKWZ5fXycw69u17>

Newsletter and Communications – We Need Your Help!

While our KidsMatter newsletter has featured incredible contributions from our members and scholarship recipients, we would love to receive more article contributions from our members. We are also actively seeking a co-editor to support Jill Roth and the Newsletter Committee. If you're interested in helping shape our Section's voice and spotlight the work we're doing across the state, please email me or Jill Roth to get involved. This is a great opportunity to help elevate stories, share resources, and keep our members connected.

Looking Ahead

Even in the middle of summer, our work does not slow down. I encourage each of you to contribute in any way you can—submit an article, mentor a young attorney, speak at a CLE, or join a committee. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to this work.

Wishing you all a safe and restorative rest of summer.

Warmly,
Laurie M. Thomas Williams, Esq.

Seeking Co-Editor For Newsletter

By: Jill Roth

Secretary, Child Protection & Advocacy Section



Greetings – Many thanks to Amber Walden for her recent service as editor of the Kids Matter newsletter. With her recent departure, I have stepped in to help ensure the continued success of the newsletter, but I cannot do it alone. I know many hands

make great work so I'm looking for a passionate and collaborative co-editor to join me.

As we continue to grow the reach and impact of the newsletter, this is a meaningful opportunity to spotlight the work of our members, share timely updates in child protection and advocacy, and build a stronger, more connected community.

If you enjoy writing, editing, or shaping content – and care deeply about child protection and advocacy –I'd love to work with you. Whether you're a seasoned attorney or a law student eager to get involved, your voice and perspective are welcome.

Please reach out to me or Laure Thomas if you're interested or have any questions about the role. Let's

**If you are interested in
publishing an article,
please reach out to
Jill Roth, Editor
Jill.Roth@cobbcounty.gov**

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**The State Bar
has three offices
to serve you.**

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2025 - 2026 Executive Committee Judicial District Representatives

<u>JP Berlon</u>	1	Eastern, Ogeechee, Atlantic, Brunswick, Waycross
<u>Michael Waller</u>	2	Pataula, Dougherty, South Georgia, Tifton, Southern, Alapaha
<u>Ira Foster</u>	3	Chattahoochee, Macon, Houston, Southwestern
<u>Laurie Thomas Williams</u>	4	Stone Mountain, Rockdale
<u>Afiya Hinkson</u>	5	Atlanta (Fulton)

<u>Anissa Patton</u>	6	Coweta, Griffin, Towaliga, Flint, Clayton
<u>Hon. Kareem West</u>	7	Douglas, Cobb, Paulding, Tallapoosa, Rome, Cherokee, Lookout Mtn, Conasauga
<u>Hon. Stephanie Burton</u>	8	Ocmulgee, Dublin, Middle, Oconee, Cordele
<u>Michelle Vereen</u>	9	Appalachian, Enotah, Mountain, Northeastern, Gwinnett, Bell-Forsyth, Blue Ridge
Vacant	10	Toombs, Augusta

If you are a CPAS member living in District 10 (Toombs, Augusta) interested in becoming a District 10 representative, please reach out to [Laurie Thomas Williams](#).

Accessing Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Policies

Child Welfare: The public can access all Department of Human Services' policies, (including the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)), by navigating to PAMMS (formerly ODIS): <https://pamms.dhs.ga.gov/>.

Once you have accessed this web page, click on "Division of Family and Children Services" on the left-hand side. On the next page, click "Child Welfare Services" on the left-hand side. This will take you to the landing page for the Child Welfare Policy Manual.

Juvenile Justice: The public can access the Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) policies by navigating to: <http://public.powerdms.com/GADJJ/tree>.

If an attorney needs additional policies or related attachments, they may also reach out to Cindy Wang, General Counsel for DJJ's Office of Legal Services, at cindy.wang@djg.state.ga.us.

Georgia General Assembly 2024 Legislative Session Update

By: Jill Roth, CWLS

In the 2024 legislative session, the Georgia General Assembly enacted several bills impacting child welfare and juvenile justice. Key budget details and legislation are discussed below.

Legislative and Budget Overview

- HB 340 – Prohibits students from possessing cell phones at elementary and middle schools.
- SB 110 – Revises definition of neglect and reckless conduct.
- SB 259 – Ridge's Law – Provides right to independent medical evaluation at parental expense when physician suspects neglect or abuse.
- SB 123 – Compulsory attendance law updates
- SB 85 – Foster care scholarship – for GA

public/private colleges for youth in foster care as teens, adopted from foster care after 14, or were adopted as a special needs child, includes housing and meal plan coverage.

- Up to full tuition, board, and books, up to 30k for 10 years to attend post-secondary school!
- SB 268 – School safety bill
 - 19.6 million for school-based mental health grants to address behavioral health needs of students.
 - 2.4 million for school social workers.
 - About 68K for school security upgrades and school threat assessment system.
 - 1.5 million to lower the school psychologist-student ratio from 1:2,475 students to 1:2,420 students.
 - 7 million allocated to provide funding for student advocate specialists to assist with behavioral health problems in schools to support implementation of HB 268.
 - 20 million in grant funding for school in-house mental health providers, to be administered by the Department of Education (DOE); this is in addition to APEX funding which is administered by the Department of Education and the Department of Public Health.
 - 12.5 million for BOOST after-school programming.
 - Signed interstate compact for psychologists to make it easier for psychologists to practice across state lines; needs a few additional states before it becomes effective.

HB 340 - Distraction-Free Education Act

- By January 1, 2026, each local school system and public school must adopt policies and procedures that:
 - Prohibit bell-to-bell access of personal electronic devices by K-8 students.
 - Establish appropriate methods for storing students' devices.
 - Establish clear procedures for off-site events or activities, including all school-sponsored events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and

extracurricular activities and other instructional opportunities that do not occur on school grounds.

- Establish clear communication protocols that facilitate all emergency communication through school emergency communication management systems and coordinated by school personnel.

SB 110 – Revises Definition of Neglect and Reckless Conduct

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Revises definitions of neglect in 15-11-2(48) and reckless conduct in Title 16-5-60
- Aims to prevent subjective interpretations that could lead to unwarranted state intervention in family matters.
- Parent's absence must pose an "imminent risk" of harm to the child and parents must show "blatant disregard" for that risk to be considered neglect.
- Spells out unsupervised activities children can engage in without their parents being accused of neglect – including playing indoors or outdoors alone or with other children, walking to or from school, running errands, traveling to local commercial or recreational facilities.
- Shifts definition of neglect from a parent's failure to provide "proper" care to failure to provide "necessary" care. What is proper may vary from person to person, but what is necessary covers basic needs, like food, shelter, clothing.
 - o Revises Definition of Neglect 15-11-2(48): The failure to provide **proper necessary** parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care or control necessary for a child's physical, mental or emotional health or **morals safety**; the **failure to provide a child with adequate supervision necessary for such child's well-being health or safety due to a legal custodian having placed the child in a situation that requires judgment or actions beyond such child's level of maturity, physical abilities, or mental abilities and thereby creating a real, significant, and imminent risk of harm to the child as a result of blatant**

disregard for such legal custodian's responsibilities; or the abandonment of a child by his or her parent, guardian, or legal custodian; **provided, however, that such term shall not include a legal custodian permitting a child to engage in one or more independent activities, only if the legal custodian reasonably believes the child is of sufficient maturity, physical abilities, and mental abilities to avoid substantial risk of harm.**

- o **Blatant disregard**: a real, significant, and imminent risk of harm that would be so obvious to a legal custodian that a legal custodian acting reasonably would not have exposed the child to the imminent risk of harm without exercising precautionary measures to protect the child from such harm.
- o **Independent activity**: the activity of a child who is not under the direct supervision of a legal custodian or person acting in loco parentis and shall include, but shall not be limited to, playing indoors or outdoors alone or with other children, walking to or from school, running errands, or traveling to local commercial or recreational facilities.
 - Strikeouts show deleted language and **bold** shows new language.

- Revises 16-5-60 reckless conduct statute to specifically provide that it shall not be a violation of the reckless conduct law for a legal custodian to permit a child to engage in one or more independent activities unless doing so constitutes neglect pursuant to 15-11-2(48).

Ridge's Law SB 259 – Independent Medical Evaluations

- Effective May 12, 2025
- Amends 15-11-131, relating to temporary protective custody of a child by a physician without court order and without parental consent, by requiring that:
 - A physician holding a child in temporary protective custody shall:
 - Make reasonable and diligent

efforts to inform the child's parents, guardian, or legal custodian of the whereabouts of such child and the right to obtain an independent medical evaluation or pediatric specialty consultation as provided for under Code Section 15-11-131.1;

- As soon as possible, make a report of the suspected abuse or neglect which caused him or her to take temporary custody of the child and inform DFCS of the basis of his or her determinations, including whether a physical examination was conducted and what medical records were reviewed, and that such child has been held in temporary custody; and;
- Not later than 24 hours after such child is held in temporary custody:
 - Contact a juvenile court intake officer, and inform such intake officer that such child is in imminent danger to his or her life or health as a result of suspected abuse or neglect; or
 - Contact a law enforcement officer who shall take such child and promptly bring such child before a juvenile court intake officer.

be necessary to facilitate an independent medical evaluation or pediatric specialty consultation for such child.

- o Pediatric specialty consultation means a consultation with a physician licensed to practice medicine in this state and board certified in the relevant pediatric field or specialty, including radiology, genetics, orthopedics, endocrinology, neurosurgery, child abuse pediatrics, gastroenterology, surgery, or forensic pathology, and to diagnose and treat certain health conditions, including rickets, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, osteogenesis imperfecta, vitamin D deficiency, or other medical conditions related to the differential diagnosis of child abuse or neglect.

- At any hearing concerning a child before the court in a dependency proceeding, the court shall consider the results from an independent medical evaluation or pediatric specialty consultation of such child.
- No adjudication hearing shall be continued solely because the results from an independent medical evaluation or pediatric specialty consultation of the child before the court are unavailable.

- Adds new Code section, 15-11-131.1, which reads:

- Any parent or legal guardian of a child who is taken into temporary protective custody pursuant to Code Section 15-11-131 shall have the right to obtain an independent medical evaluation or pediatric specialty consultation of such child at his or her own expense unless prohibited by court order. Physicians and medical professionals, law enforcement officers, and DFCS shall cooperate as may reasonably

SB 123 – Compulsory Attendance Law

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Replaces word “mandatory” with “compulsory” in 20-2-690 & 20-2-290.1
- Adds new code section 20-2-690.3
- Provides definitions:
 - Chronically absent: student whose total number of absences, whether excused or unexcused, at any time during the school year is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of school days that such student has been enrolled at the same school or within the same local school system during the current school year excepting such student's

first day of enrollment.

- Local school system chronic absenteeism rate: number of students enrolled in a local school system who were chronically absent during the previous school year divided by the number of students enrolled in such local school system during such school year.
- School chronic absenteeism rate: number of students enrolled in a school who were chronically absent during the previous school year divided by the total number of students enrolled in such school during the school year.

· Schools

- No student shall be expelled solely due to absenteeism.
- Each local school system with a chronic absenteeism rate of 10 percent or higher shall establish an attendance review team.
- Each local school system with one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher shall establish an attendance review team for each such school.
- Required to develop intervention plans for chronically absent students.
- Attendance review team may consist of school administrators, school counselors, school social workers, teachers, other school personnel, and the parents/guardians of students who are chronically absent.
- Must meet at least once monthly.
- Responsible for reviewing the individual cases of students who are chronically absent and developing intervention plans for such students and their parents/guardians.
- Local school system attendance review team is authorized to work in conjunction with school-based attendance review teams.
- Requires each local school system to establish policies and procedures to effectively and continuously identify and provide appropriate supports to students who are chronically absent or at risk of becoming chronically absent,

including, but not limited to, policies and procedures for attendance review teams and for intervention plans for such students and their parents or guardians.

· Students & Parent/Guardian/Legal Custodians

- Strikes “other person residing within this state having control or charge” and replaces with “parent” and “parent or guardian” defined as biological parent, legal guardian, custodian, or other person with legal authority to act on behalf of a child.
- Each child in this state shall be required to attend a public school, a private school, or a home study program between his or her sixth and sixteenth birthdays.
- Parents required to furnish info to schools regarding student’s disciplinary and criminal background when enrolling.

· Student Attendance and Climate Committees (SACC)

- Superior court chief judge required to call first meeting of local student attendance and climate committee no later than November 1, 2025, and twice annually thereafter.
- Beginning in 2026, by November 1 of each even-numbered year, the Georgia DOE shall submit to the chairpersons of the House Committee on Education and Senate Education and Youth Committee a county-by-county report of compliance with the SACC statutory requirements, which shall be posted on the DoE public website.
 - Report to include student attendance rates and aggregated student discipline data submitted by each local board of education (BOE) for the three (3) most recently completed school years.

HB 268 – School Safety Bill – Apalachee Bill - Overview

- Effective July 1, 2025
- Establishes statewide system for reporting and monitoring threats against schools and facilitating communication between schools

and law enforcement.

- Establishes an anonymous 24/7 tip line for reporting potential threats, campus mapping, statewide emergency alert system, and wearable panic buttons for school staff.
- Requires law enforcement to inform schools when a student makes a credible threat of death or serious injury to persons who could be present at school and to place such students on a statewide database (GEMA to set inclusion and review criteria).
- Mandates the transfer of student records, including behavioral and disciplinary information, when a student moves to a new school within five (5) business days of enrollment.
- Requires parents to report child's disciplinary history and designated felony adjudications when enrolling and requires parents to participate in school conferences; allows for juvenile court to order parent to authorize release of records if parent willfully and unreasonably fails to authorize students records as required by 20-2-670 and to attend school conferences.
- Allocates funding for student advocacy specialists in school systems to address mental health concerns.
- By 12/31/25 the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and the Georgia Department of Education must establish duties and qualifications for student advocacy specialists to include coordinating efforts to identify and facilitate interventions for students with or at risk for mental health concerns, evaluating and reporting outcomes of Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavioral health training programs, etc.
- Allows for the prosecution of minors aged 13-16 as adults for terroristic acts on a school, aggravated assault with a firearm, and attempted murder.
- Requires each public school to prepare a school safety plan to address the behavioral health needs of students, including a behavioral threat assessment management plan, which

shall provide for coordination with local law enforcement and juvenile court, and which will be submitted to DBHDD for approval by 01/01/2027.

- Requires local BOEs to implement PBIS and RTI programs and initiatives in each elementary and middle school that is a high needs school (a public school receiving a school climate rating of 1 or 2 stars pursuant to 20-14-33), implementation shall include but not be limited to:
 - PBIS Tier 1 supports for 100% of students and school personnel;
 - Specific PBIS Tier 2 supports and interventions for students at risk for developing more serious unwanted behaviors, such as small group resilience and behavioral health skills lessons approved by DBHDD; and
 - Each school year, not less than 95% of school personnel receive two (2) hours of student behavioral health awareness training approved by DBHDD.
- Suicide and Youth Violation Prevention and Awareness: beginning in the 2026-27 school year, each 6-12th grade school receiving state funds must provide at least one-hour of evidence-based suicide awareness and prevention training and one-hour of youth violence prevention training each school year.

HB 268 – Comprehensive School Safety Bill - Apalachee Bill and Absenteeism

- Requires law enforcement to inform the school and parent when an officer assumes temporary custody of a child subject to compulsory attendance who is found away from home and who is absent from public, private, or home school without a valid written excuse from school officials or the parent in charge of the home school program.

Requires school to refer children to DFCS and RESA (GA Regional Education Service Agencies [RESA webpage](#)) if absent from school for thirty (30) consecutive days if:

- The parent/guardian does not notify the

school of student's withdrawal;

- The parent/guardian does not notify the school of student's intent to enroll in a home study program or another school;
 - Such student is withdrawn from such school without a declaration filed pursuant to 20-2-690(c); or
 - Such student is sixteen (16) years of age or older and stops attending school without completing the conference required under 20-2-690.1(e) (requiring a conference with school administration prior to a child 16+ dropping out of school before acquiring a degree).
- DFCS required to conduct an assessment to determine whether withdrawal was to avoid educating student, provided, however, that upon completion of such conference or presentation or a copy of the filed declaration, DFCS shall immediately terminate such assessment.
 - RESA to determine whether student has enrolled in a home study program or another school and, if such student has enrolled in another school, to determine whether such school received the student's education records; provided, however, upon receiving notice that child enrolled in or intends to enroll in a home study program or another school, the referring school shall immediately notify RESA of such intent or enrollment, and if such student has enrolled or intends to enroll in another school, confirm the date by which such student's education records will be released to such student's new school.

HB 268 – Parental School Involvement with Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students – Enforcement Mechanism Added to 20-2-765-20-2-766.1

- Any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call and by either certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested or first-class mail the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian attend a conference with the principal

or teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. 20-2-765.

- “Chronic disciplinary problem student” – a student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her which are likely to recur. 20-2-764.
- Before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return from an expulsion or suspension, the school to which the student is to be readmitted shall request by telephone call and by either certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested or first-class mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference with the principal or his or her designee to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student from being readmitted to the school. At the discretion of the principal, a teacher, a counselor, or other person may attend the conference. The principal shall ensure that a notation of the conference is placed in the student's permanent file. 20-2-766.
- A local BOE may, by petition to the juvenile court, proceed against a parent/guardian for failing to participate in the conference. 20-2-766.1.
- If the court finds that parent/guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by a principal, the court may order such parent/guardian to attend such conference or participate in such programs or treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. 20-2-766.1.
- If the court finds parent/guardian willfully and unreasonably failed to authorize the release of student education records as required by 20-2-670, the court may order the parent or guardian to authorize the release of such records. 20-2-766.1.
- After notice and opportunity for a hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court entered pursuant to 20-2-765. The court may use its contempt and other

powers specified in 15-11-31 to enforce any order entered under 20-2-766.1.

HB 268 – Parental Involvement – Required Enrollment Disclosures, 20-2-670

- Requires parents/legal custodians to execute a document when seeking enrollment of a student in a grade higher than 3rd that discloses to the receiving school whether the student:
 - Has ever been adjudicated delinquent of a class A or B designated felony, and if so, the date of the adjudication, the offense, jurisdiction, and sentence imposed;
 - Is currently under short or long-term suspension or expulsion from another school, the reason for such discipline, and the term of such discipline;
 - Is currently subject to a notice of a disciplinary hearing pursuant to 20-2-754; or
 - Is currently or has ever been the subject of any:
 - Notice of a criminal action made pursuant to 20-2-756
 - Notice of chronic disciplinary problem pursuant to 20-2-765
 - Disciplinary and behavioral correction plan pursuant to 20-2-766, or
 - The commission of a prohibited act made pursuant to 20-2-1184.
- Parents also must present a certified copy of such student's "critical records" from each sending school attended during the previous twenty-four (24) months; or receive written confirmation from such receiving school that it has received such student's critical records.
- Any request for enrollment or to authorize the release of education records to a receiving school shall include: a list of class A and class B DF acts, a list of prohibited acts identified

in 20-2-1184, and a description of a notice of disciplinary hearing made pursuant to 20-2-756, a notice of chronic disciplinary problem 20-2-765, disciplinary and behavioral correction plan 20-2-766, and report of commission of a prohibited act 20-2-1184.

- Whenever a transferring student's records are transferred, the student's parent/legal custodian shall be notified in writing by the receiving school and shall, upon written request made within five (5) school business days of the date of such notice, be entitled to receive a copy of such records from the receiving school.
- Within five (5) days of receipt, parent/legal guardian may make a written request for and shall be entitled to a meeting with the principal of the sending or receiving school for the purpose of correcting the content of such records as provided in 20-2-667; the parties may mutually agree for such meeting to occur outside such 5-school business day period.

HB 268 – Parental Involvement – Required Enrollment Disclosures, 20-2-670 – Provisional Enrollment

- Student may be provisionally enrolled for not more than ten (10) school days on a conditional basis, provided, however, that provisional enrollment shall not commence until the next school day after such student's parent or legal custodian executes a document:
 - Disclosing the information required by 20-2-670(b)(1), and
 - Providing the name and address of each sending school such student attended during the previous 24 months and authorizing the immediate release of such student's "critical records" to the receiving school.
- If the receiving school does not receive the student's critical records, it shall be authorized to temporarily assign the student to remote learning until the

critical records are received or the case management consultation provided for in 20-2-670(i) has been completed.

- If a student provisionally enrolled is found ineligible for enrollment pursuant to 20-2-751.2, or is subsequently found ineligible, he/she shall be dismissed from enrollment until he/she becomes eligible.

HB 268 – Requires School Administrators to Tell Teachers about Student Disciplinary History, 20-2-671

- HB 268 requires school administrators to notify all teachers to whom a student is assigned that they can review information provided pursuant to 15-11-602 (requiring juvenile courts to identify the school last attended by a child adjudicated for a class A designated felony act or class B designated felony act and the school which such student intends to attend, and to transmit a copy of the adjudication order to the principals of both schools within 30 days of the adjudication subject to notification, distribution and other requirements as provided in 20-2-671) or 20-7-670 or from any other source that a student has:
 - Committed a class A or class B designated felony (DF) act,
 - Is subject to notice of chronic disciplinary program pursuant to 20-2-765,
 - Has a current disciplinary and behavioral correction plan pursuant to 20-2-766, or
 - Is the subject of a report of the commission of prohibited act pursuant to 20-2-1184.
- Such information shall be kept confidential.

HB 268 – Comprehensive School Safety Bill - Amends 20-2-1181 – Disrupting Public Schools Statute

- Requires local BOEs to develop progressive discipline system to be imposed on a child accused of violating the disrupting public school statute before initiating a complaint; the progressive discipline system shall include a requirement that when there is a credible accusation that an individual threatened, whether verbally, in writing, or otherwise, the death or serious

injury to a group of individuals, who are, or will likely be, at or within a public school that such individual attends, or has attended, the school shall be authorized to temporarily assign such individual to remote learning and provide counseling to such individual and shall initiate an investigation into such violation. Upon completion of the investigation, the school may elect to reinstate the individual or impose relevant discipline.

HB 268 – New Offense of Terroristic Threat of a School, 20-2-1181.1

- Terroristic Threat of a School: A person commits the offense of a terroristic threat of a school when he or she threatens to commit any crime of violence, release any hazardous substance, or burn or damage property and such threat is made:
 - With the purpose of terrorizing another who at the time of such threat is physically present:
 - § On public or private school operated property, including, but not limited to, school buildings and school grounds;
 - § On a school bus or other vehicle furnished by a public or private school for the transportation of students; or
 - § At a public or private school sponsored activity;
 - With the purpose of causing the evacuation of public or private school operated property, including, but not limited to, school buildings and school grounds; or a school bus or other vehicle furnished by a public or private school for the transportation of students; or
 - In reckless disregard of the risk of causing the terror or evacuation; provided, however, that no person shall be convicted under this subsection based on the uncorroborated testimony of the party to whom the threat is communicated.
 - A person convicted of the offense of a terroristic threat of a school shall be

punished as for a misdemeanor; provided, however, that, if the threat suggested the death of any person, the person shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000.00, imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years, or both; and provided, further, that, if any person suffers a serious physical injury as a direct result of a threat giving rise to a conviction under subsection (b) of this Code section, the person shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$250,000.00, imprisonment for not less than five nor more than 40 years, or both.

- An exclusive original jurisdiction juvenile court offense.

HB 268 – New Offense of Terroristic Act Upon a School, 20-2-1181.1

- Terroristic Act Upon a School - New superior court exclusive jurisdiction offense.
- A person convicted of the offense of a terroristic act upon a school shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$5,000.00, imprisonment for not less than one nor more than ten years, or both; provided, however, that, if any person suffers a serious physical injury as a direct result of an act giving rise to a conviction under subsection (c) of this Code section, the person shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$250,000.00, imprisonment for not less than five nor more than 40 years, or both.
- A person commits the offense of a terroristic act upon a school when he or she commits an act of using a weapon or flaming symbol or flambeau, releasing any hazardous substance or any simulated hazardous substance under the guise of a hazardous substance, or, while not in the commission of a lawful act, shooting at a conveyance which is being operated or which is occupied by passengers and such act is committed:

- With the purpose of terrorizing another who at the time of such act is physically present:
 - On public or private school operated property, including, but not limited to, school buildings and school grounds;
 - On a school bus or other vehicle furnished by a public or private school for the transportation of students; or
 - At a public or private school sponsored activity; or
- With the purpose of causing the evacuation of:
 - Public or private school operated property, including, but not limited to, school buildings and school grounds; or
 - A school bus or other vehicle furnished by a public or private school for the transportation of students.

HB 268 – Add 3 Offenses to List of Exclusive Original Superior Court Jurisdiction Cases, 15-11-560

- Aggravated assault if committed with a firearm;
- Terroristic acts on a school in violation of Code Section 20-2-1181.1(c); and
- Attempted murder.

The Georgia General Assembly is scheduled to begin a new two-year session in January 2026. Bills introduced during the 2025 session that were not passed will carry over into the 2026 session.

Voices for Georgia’s Children is an organization that works to improve policies and systems that impact child wellbeing by advancing laws, policies and actions that improve children’s lives. They conduct research and release reports and factsheets, convene coalitions and hold events, and publish frequent newsletters to keep those interested up to date on the latest child-related policy and legislative initiatives. You can sign up to receive legislative and policy updates from Voices for Georgia’s Children at [Voices for Georgia’s Children](https://www.voicesforgeorgia.org/).

You can also sign up to receive legislative updates from Emory University School of Law's Barton Child Law and Policy Center at [Barton Center](#).

Case Law Update

By: Jill Roth, CWLS

Howard v. State, 909 S.E.2d 660 (2024). Howard entered plea in superior court to offenses of robbery by force, robbery by intimidation, and gang offenses. At the time the offenses were committed, Howard was 16. He was sentenced as a first offender. State later sought to revoke his probation. Howard raised lack of jurisdiction. Trial court revoked his probation. On appeal, state conceded superior court lacked jurisdiction to accept Howard's original plea and subsequent resentencing because he was a juvenile at the time of those offenses and those offenses were not on the list of offenses for which a juvenile may be charged as an adult under 15-11-560; therefore, judgments entered were a "mere nullity" according to 17-9-4. Vacated and remanded with direction.

Cooper v. State, 914 S.E.2d 800 (2025). Superior court had jurisdiction over defendant's prosecution even though defendant was reindicted more than 180 days after his arrest where the original indictment was returned within 118 days after his arrest. 17-7-50.1 "only requires that a true bill be returned on at least one charge that is within the jurisdiction of the superior court [within 180 days] for the court to retain jurisdiction."

ITIO J.T.S.S., 373 Ga. App. 300 (2024). Evidence showed minor who came from Guatemala and was placed with sister with parental consent was dependent as she was in Georgia without her parent, guardian, or legal custodian. Parental decision to place child with sister was not akin to a transfer of custody between parents and the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Trial courts must address SIJS findings when properly requested to do so.

Mendoza v. Mendoza Garcia, 374 Ga. App. 730 (2025). Trial courts must adjudicate SIJS findings when requested to do so but can make a finding that petitioner has failed to prove: 1) that reunification is not viable, or 2) that it would not be in the child's best interest to be returned to their country of origin. Trial court has discretion to find testimony "non-credible" and "non-persuasive."

ITIO L.A.D.H., 910 S.E.2d 235 (2024). Remanded TPR to trial court due to trial court's failure to hold a hearing on the parents' motions for new trial. Motions were timely filed. Right to hearing on MNT is well-settled, codified in 5-5-40, and required by due process under the Constitution. Failure to conduct MNT hearing is never harmless error.

ITIO M.J.E.B., 374 Ga. App. 303 (2025). Post TPR. Competing petitions for adoption by two out of state relatives. Court kept children in DFCS custody while acknowledging that one of the relatives was the intended placement for DFCS. Trial court has broad authority to weigh evidence and make best interest findings even where two placements are appropriate. Court considered all pertinent factors and did not abuse discretion in choosing one relative over other as preferred placement.

Rodgers v. Rodgers, 374 Ga. App. 455 (2025). Pursuant to 5-6-35(a)(2), a party seeking appellate review in a domestic relations case must follow discretionary appeal procedures. However, under 5-6-34(a)(11), a party is entitled to appeal directly from "[a]ll judgments or orders in child custody cases awarding, refusing to change, or modifying child custody." Where an appeal is from a child custody case, the appellate courts will look to the issue raised on appeal to determine whether direct appeal is permitted. Mother argued appellate jurisdiction based on the trial court's refusal to modify custody; however, she did not challenge any custody rulings on appeal, rather she challenged the court's finding that the children were "deprived" and the court's termination of the custody hearing and transfer of the case to juvenile court. Because mother was not challenging the custody ruling on appeal, she was not entitled to direct appeal.

Onyemobi v. Onyemobi, A25A0570, Ga. App. (May 29, 2025). Dismissing appeal for using wrong procedure. Clarifies conflicting opinions as to whether a child custody ruling can be directly appealed under 5-6-34(a)(11) if the custody determination is made as part of a divorce case. Generally, appeals from orders entered in "divorce, alimony, or other domestic relations cases" must be pursued by discretionary application. O.C.G.A. § 5-6-35 (a) (2), (b). On the other hand, under O.C.G.A. § 5-6-34 (a)(11), "[a]ll judgments or orders in child custody cases awarding, refusing to change, or modifying child custody or holding or declining to hold

persons in contempt of such child custody judgment or orders” are deemed directly appealable. A divorce action is not a child custody proceeding, but instead is a proceeding brought to determine whether a marriage should be dissolved. All other issues in a divorce action, including child custody, are merely ancillary to that primary issue. In a somewhat similar context, the CoA has held that even though a dependency proceeding necessitates a determination as to child custody, the proceeding itself is to determine whether the child is dependent and is not an action brought to decide custody matters. Todd v. Todd, 287 Ga. 250, 251 (1), 703 S.E.2d 597 (2010) (citations and punctuation omitted). An application for appeal is required when the underlying subject matter is listed in O.C.G.A. § 5–6–35 (a). Therefore, the discretionary application procedure must be followed, even when the party is appealing a judgment or order that is procedurally subject to a direct appeal under O.C.G.A. § 5–6–34(a). When a child custody determination is made within the framework of a divorce case, the discretionary appeal process outlined in O.C.G.A. § 5-6-35 is applicable. When a trial court issues a child custody determination as part of divorce proceedings, any appeal seeking review of that child custody determination requires that the appellant utilize the discretionary appeal procedures set forth in O.C.G.A. § 5-6-35 (a) (2), regardless of whether the child custody determination is made via final decree or, as here, as part of a temporary order. If the order is not a final judgment, but an interlocutory order, as was the order at issue in this case, the additional requirements set forth in OCGA § 5-6-34 (b) are also applicable.

Hether v. Campbell, 374 Ga. App. 320 (2025). CoA reversed self-executing provision modifying custody in the event the mother moved out-of-state. The trial court had explicitly found mother’s move was not a material change in circumstances affecting the children’s welfare. “Self-executing change of custody provisions allow for an ‘automatic’ change in custody based on a future event without any additional judicial scrutiny.” Scott v. Scott, 276 Ga. 372, 373, 578 S.E.2d 876 (2003). “Provisions that do not take account of the best interests of the child at the time of a triggering event are utterly devoid of the flexibility necessary to adapt to the unique variables that arise in every case, variables that must be assessed in order to determine what serves the best interests and welfare of a child.” (Citation and punctuation omitted.) Bankston v. Warbington, 332 Ga. App. 29,

34 (2), 771 S.E.2d 726 (2015). Our Supreme Court has held that “any self-executing change of custody provision that fails to give paramount import to the child’s best interests in a change of custody as between parents must be stricken as violative of Georgia public policy.” (Punctuation and footnote omitted.) Lester v. Boles, 335 Ga. App. 891, 892 (1), 782 S.E.2d 53 (2016) (citing Dellinger v. Dellinger, 278 Ga. 732, 733 (1), 609 S.E.2d 331 (2004)). Compare Bodne, 277 Ga. at 446-447, 588 S.E.2d 728 (trial court did not abuse its discretion in changing primary physical custody of children due to relocation of primary parent where trial court found a material change in circumstances affecting the children’s welfare and engaged in best interest analysis).

Kimbrow v. Warren, 374 Ga. App. 72 (2025). Once an award of child custody has been made, when a parent seeks to change that arrangement, the trial court must first determine whether there has been a material change of circumstances affecting the child’s welfare. A change of custody may be granted only if a new and material change in circumstances affects the child. The trial court must find that a material change in circumstances has taken place *before* it can consider whether modification of custody is in the child’s best interests. Vacated and remanded for trial court to make threshold determination of a material change of circumstances before deciding whether to modify custody.

Ogundana v. Ogundana, A25A0180 (Ga. App. May 29, 2025). Father brought child custody action in Cobb County against mother. He sought permission to serve by publication which was granted. Mother learned of suit and filed a verified answer in Cobb, swearing that she resides in Fulton and requesting action be transferred because jurisdiction and venue were not proper in Cobb. Mother had 60 days from date trial court ordered service by publication to file answer; however, time does not begin to run until proof of service is filed. Time for filing answer never ran because clerk never filed certificate certifying publication; therefore, mother’s answer was timely. Complaints for legal or physical custody must be tried in the county where the defendant resides per GA Constitution. Vacated and remanded with direction to transfer to Fulton Superior Court.

Heyman v. Heyman, 374 Ga. App. 784 (2025). Discusses differences in request for MNT based on “general

grounds” and those based on “newly discovered evidence.” The motion for new trial procedure outlined in O.C.G.A. § 5-5-23 is more mechanical — and more stringent — than the “general grounds” motion for new trial standard. By failing to evaluate wife’s argument based upon the “general grounds” in this case, the trial court imposed a more difficult standard than was appropriate. As a result, the CoA vacated the trial court’s order denying wife’s motion for new trial and remanded the case to the trial court to allow it the opportunity to apply the “general grounds” analysis. Also, the filing of MNT acts as supersedeas unless otherwise ordered by the court; therefore, a party may not be held in contempt for violating the underlying order so long as the MNT remains pending. Similarly, a notice of appeal will act as supersedeas in civil cases. Court may modify visitation rights during a contempt proceeding but not custody rights. Modification of decision-making authority is tantamount to a custody modification.

ITIO D.B., A25A0616 (Ga. App. June 23, 2025). After a child in the home tragically died by suicide, Fulton County DFCS filed two emergency ex parte petitions to remove his siblings from their mother’s custody, citing inadequate supervision and prior DFCS involvement. The juvenile court denied the first petition but granted the second, removing the children without a hearing. At the preliminary protective hearing, the children were returned to the mother.

The case was not moot, even though children were returned at the PPH, because the issue was capable of repetition yet evading review due to the short timeframe in ex parte removals.

The CoA found the current statutory ex parte removal process comports with due process, even though it does not require allegations of imminent danger for ex parte removal, only that continued residence in the home is contrary to the child’s welfare.

DFCS provided detailed explanation of the circumstances justifying the removal. Specifically, the emergency request for an ex parte order for protective custody contained an affidavit detailing the facts surrounding DFCS’s request and opining that “[t]he mother has demonstrated ... the lack of parenting knowledge and skills to keep her children safe.” According to this document, “two of the mother’s

remaining children stated the gun was retrieved from a closet in the home and [the mother] was aware of the weapon being there.” The request indicated that removal was “the only and necessary solution” because the mother “lacks the capacity to keep the children safe as the family has had history each year from 2018 until 2024 with concern of inadequate food, clothing/shelter, supervision, and educational neglect.” Likewise, the dependency complaint noted that one of the mother’s children had gained access to an unsecured gun in the home and shot himself in the head in front of his seven-year-old brother. According to the complaint, “[t]he department ha[d] concerns regarding inadequate supervision as [the mother] ha[d] p[re]vious history with the department for concerns of inadequate supervision, inadequate food, clothing/shelter, and educational neglect.” The family “had history [with DFCS] each year from 2018 until 2024.” DFCS requested removal “due to there being concerns for lack of a caregiver to keep the children safe.” The complaint stated that a law enforcement investigation regarding the shooting was pending. Based on these documents, the juvenile court issued a July 11, 2024, written ex parte order authorizing the removal to safeguard the children’s welfare due to “inadequate supervision[.]” The order concluded that continuation in the home was contrary to the children’s welfare and that removal was in the children’s best interests.

Following the children’s removal from their home, the mother was afforded all procedural safeguards required by the Juvenile Code, including a prompt preliminary protective hearing. The preliminary protective hearing was originally scheduled within the 72-hour statutorily mandated time frame, though the parties agreed to a continuance of the originally scheduled hearing. At the preliminary protective hearing, the mother was given the opportunity to contest the removal by presenting evidence and examining witnesses.

The CoA majority held that the Georgia Juvenile Code clearly outlines the process for ex parte removals and does not require a finding of exceptional circumstances prior to the court issuing an ex parte removal order. See O.C.G.A. §§ 15-11-133 (a), (b) (removal of child from the home); 15-11-134 (required findings justifying removal from the home); 15-11-145 (preliminary protective hearing requirements); 15-11-146 (preliminary protective hearing findings). Compare In the Interest of R. B., 346 Ga. App. 564, 566, 569-570 (1),

816 S.E.2d 706 (2018) (finding mother's due process rights were violated where trial court failed to hold a preliminary hearing within 72 hours after the children were removed, failed to give the mother proper notice of the hearing, and failed to make required written findings as to the children's welfare).

Judge McFadden concurred on the mootness issue but dissented on the due process issue, opining that the majority erred in allowing removal without clear emergency grounds, arguing that *ex parte* removals should only be allowed in "exceptional circumstances." He disagreed that the post-removal preliminary protective hearing process sufficiently protects parental due process rights, emphasizing that "parents are constitutionally entitled to a hearing on their fitness *before* their children are removed from their custody," and that the Georgia Juvenile Code is subordinate to and must be construed in light of the federal rights recognized by the federal and Georgia constitutions. Stanley v. Illinois, 405 U.S. 645 (1972) (emphasis added). He further opined that the majority erred in ignoring the language in 15-11-132 that provides for the issuance of *ex parte* removal orders "under exceptional circumstances" and would hold that before granting *ex parte* relief, juvenile courts must consider whether exceptional circumstances exist.

All judges agreed that DFCS's act of removing the children from the mother compounded the tragedy of their brother's death.

ITIO G.N.N., A25A0686 (Ga. Ct. App. May 29, 2025). TPR. Clear and convincing evidence supported finding that mother abandoned child and that TPR was in child's BI. Mother admitted that she only visited with child on an irregular basis, although she was supposed to visit him weekly, mother had not progressed with her reunification plan, even though she knew successful progress would result in child's return to her care, but had instead discontinued counseling sessions, failed to pay child support, and refused to participate in drug screens, refused to engage with representatives of DFCS, or arrange inspections of her home, and mother herself testified that she was not arguing that child should be returned to her own care, but to the care of her extended family. G. N. N. was thriving in his foster home and returning him to mother and the resulting potential exposure to domestic violence would be harmful to his wellbeing. DFCS asserted that

G. N. N.'s best interest would be to "find permanency in a safe and stable home" rather than lingering "in foster care waiting on [his] parents to comply" with the reunification plan.

ITIO J.K., A25A0637 (May 29, 2025). Vacating and remanding to juvenile court to explicitly address whether or how a permanency plan short of terminating mother's parental rights would expose children to continued dependency, as required prior to terminating mother's parental rights. A mother's inability to care for her children does not necessarily mean that her current relationship with them is detrimental, so as to warrant terminating her parental rights. Order terminating parental rights on basis of continued dependency must contain explicit findings supporting conclusion that continued dependency will cause or is likely to cause serious physical, mental, emotional, or moral harm to child; critically, evidence must show how each individual child will be harmed by status quo to degree necessary to justify terminating parental rights.

While the juvenile court's detailed order appeared to comply generally with the requirements of Georgia law, it did not make *explicit, specific findings* about each of the children individually and whether they would suffer *individualized* harm from maintaining the uneasy status quo. To be sure, the court delineated several factual findings as to the mother and the children collectively and concluded that returning the children to the mother would be detrimental or harmful to them (which the mother appears to concede), but it did not make specific findings regarding whether each child *individually* would be harmed by remaining in their current placements. While the CoA questioned whether the mother would ever be able to regain custody of her children, it vacated and remanded for the trial court to make individualized findings, noting "... doing so is no mere formality." It ensures that a parent's fundamental, constitutional right to familial relations is safeguarded from arbitrary governmental interference into the private realm of family life.

Sheppard v. Milsap, 374 Ga.App. 480 (2025). Upholding trial court's grant of legitimation but reversing decision to give joint legal custody to father upon legitimation. The question of whether a parent and child should have a relationship through the legitimation process is different than the question of whether a parent with whom the child has had minimal contact should have

legal custody of that child. See O.C.G.A. § 19-9-22 (1) (legal custody means the responsibility for the care and control of a minor, including, but not limited to, the power to make decisions regarding health care, education, extracurricular activities, and religious upbringing).

Child support. Each parent must produce reliable evidence of income sufficient to allow the trial court to calculate his or her adjusted gross income, using the factors set forth in O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15 (b) (2). Reliable evidence of income includes items “such as tax returns for prior years, check stubs, or other information for determining current ability to pay child support.” O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15 (f) (4) (A). To assist the trial court in its calculations, Uniform Superior Court Rule 24.2 requires that “at least 5 days before any temporary or final hearing in any action for temporary or permanent child support, ... all parties shall serve upon the opposing party” a domestic relations financial affidavit, using the form set forth in the Rules. The parties are also required to submit, contemporaneously with their financial affidavit, the completed worksheets and schedules required by O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15. See Ga. Unif. Super. Ct. R. 24.2.

In this case, based solely on the father’s testimony, the trial court found his gross monthly income was \$1,500 and used that figure to calculate his child support obligation. However, the father’s testimony concerning his approximate monthly income, as well as his statement that some undetermined amount of money he earned went into a business account, did not constitute reliable evidence sufficient to support the trial court’s finding. Accordingly, the CoA vacated the trial court’s child support award and remanded the case for further proceedings.

The CoA remanded the case with direction that the trial court require the father to submit an updated financial affidavit with supporting documentation, such as tax returns or bank statements. The trial court should also require the father to provide the other documents required by both O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15 and Uniform Superior Court Rule 24.2. Finally, the trial court should review the income placed in the father’s business account under the guidelines set forth in O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15 (f) (1) (B) to determine whether any of those funds should be included in the father’s gross income. In calculating child support, the trial court was required

to divide the cost of the child’s health insurance premiums between the parents on a pro rata basis and to include the father’s portion in the child support award. See O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15 (h) (2) (A) (iii).

INTO G.T.G.M., A25A0241 (Ga. Ct. App. May 16, 2025). Reversing TPR. The only harm to the child specifically noted by the juvenile court in its order was harm to the child as a result of “foster care drift” in the form of “doubt, uncertainty, and hesitancy in life,” and the mother’s failure to successfully achieve the goals of her reunification case plans. The juvenile court’s order made no specific finding that: (a) returning the child to his mother was likely to cause serious physical, mental, moral, or emotional harm to him or threaten his physical safety or well-being, or (b) that continuation of the parent and child relationship would be likely to cause serious physical, mental, moral, or emotional harm to the child. “An order terminating parental rights must contain explicit findings supporting the conclusion of serious physical, mental, moral, or emotional harm to the child.” “A mere recitation that this legal requirement was met will not suffice.” The juvenile court must ascertain the facts and state not only the end result of that inquiry but the process by which it was reached. Show your work! Orders must include and explain which factual findings lead to the legal conclusions made.

“[T]he [juvenile] court did not assess the extent to which instability and impermanency are currently causing specific harms to” G. T. G. M. In the Interest of A. F., 346 Ga. App. at 544-545, 816 S.E.2d 496. Instead, the court simply “recit[ed] the legal standard without any factual underpinning.” In the Interest of R. S. T., 345 Ga. App. 300, 310 (3), 812 S.E.2d 614 (2018) (physical precedent only). Absent from the record was any evidence concerning the extent to which the mother’s transiency was likely to cause specific serious physical, mental, moral, or emotional harm to G. T. G. M. or any particular threat to the child’s physical safety or well-being.

In addition, there was little evidence in the record that continuing a parental relationship, in some form, with the mother would be likely to cause serious physical, mental, moral, or emotional harm to the child while he remains in his foster care home. See In the Interest of N. E. K., 367 Ga. App. at 55 (1) (b), 885 S.E.2d 34. While the foster parent testified that the child appeared

clingier and would awaken at night after visits, “there was no testimony at all from any witness about the effects, harmful or otherwise, of foster care on the child[] in relation to [his] dependency” to support the juvenile court’s findings in its order. In the Interest of A. F., 346 Ga. App. at 545, 816 S.E.2d 496.

Additionally, while the termination of parental rights is dependent on the circumstances of each individual child, the fact that the mother was found suitable to maintain custody of her newborn, in conjunction with the mother’s lack of substance abuse or mental health issues and DFCS’ failure to conduct a bonding assessment between the mother and the child, led the CoA to conclude that there was not clear and convincing evidence to support the termination of parental rights, as the record lacked evidence that serious harm would result if the child were returned to his mother or continued to have a parent and child relationship with the mother. See In the Interest of K. N. C., 264 Ga. App. 475, 480 (3) (a), 590 S.E.2d 792 (2003) (finding that the mother’s conduct toward one child is relevant to whether the deprivation of her other children was likely to continue).

ITIO A.H., A24A1803 (Ga. Ct. App. Feb. 24, 2025). Biological father appealed order granting permanent guardianship to maternal grandparents. DFCS argued no standing because he was serving a life sentence and could not parent child himself; COA found he had standing as his rights had not been terminated and he qualified as an “aggrieved” party with the right to appeal a judgment. BF argued trial court failed to make required findings pursuant to 15-11-240. COA found because mother consented to the permanent guardianship, there was no need for the court to assess returning child to mother’s custody.

ITIO R.E.M.B., A24A1448 (Ga. Ct. of App. March 3, 2025). TPR. Hot car case. Mother complied with some case plan requirements but had no contact with child due to bond restrictions for several months. Mother failed to pay child support, had unresolved mental health issues (not taking meds) and could not demonstrate basic parenting skills. She failed to regularly attend therapy and was observed during supervised visits struggling to appropriately parent child. Child had special needs mother incapable of meeting. Inconsistent visitation. In foster care nearly two years, started out non-verbal, not potty-trained, and biting; two years in behaviors

improved and foster family wished to adopt. COA found 15-11-310(a)(3) and (5) grounds present and TPR was in child’s BI.

ITIO H.H., A24A1245 (Ga. Ct. of App. Feb. 25, 2025). Petitions shall be verified in addition to being signed by the SAAG and endorsed by a court designee. Remanded to direct DFCS to verify the petition. All affidavits, petitions, answers, defenses, or other proceedings required to be verified or sworn to under oath shall be held to be sufficient when the same are sworn to before any notary public, magistrate, judge of any court, or any other officer of the state or county where the oath is made who is authorized by the laws thereof to administer oaths. 9-10-113.

Pierce v. Bailey, A24A1838 (Ga. Ct. of App. March 7, 2025). Mother surrendered rights to great grandparents for purposes of adoption. Foster parents filed dueling adoption petition. Both sought to TPR as to unknown biological father. FPs lacked standing to challenge the adoption. 19-8-15 permits a “family member” to object to an adoption and finds that a FP does not meet that definition. It must be a blood relative.

ITIO M.B., A25A0059 (Ga. Ct. of App. April 7, 2025). Reversed trial court on recusal. Court failed to follow Juv. Ct. Rule 17 which requires that if a recusal motion on its face and assuming all alleged facts are true would satisfy the three requirements of the rule, then it must be handed off to another judge to handle. Judges can’t oppose the motion no matter how false judge knows or believes the accusations to be.

ITIO M.R.S., S25G0338 (Ga. Sup. Ct. May 6, 2025). Remanded for the Court of Appeals to consider mother’s claims about the denial of her motion for an out-of-time appeal. Judge McFadden dissented. He would have vacated the juvenile court’s ruling on the motion for out-of-time appeal and remanded for the juvenile court to address the motion’s merits, noting, “When an appellant’s failure to invoke our jurisdiction or preserve an issue prevents us from reaching the merits of an appeal, we often have consolation that it was clearly meritless anyway. About this termination of parental rights, we do not have that consolation.”

How the YLD and CPAS Are Joining Forces to Protect Georgia's Children

The Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar of Georgia is leading the charge in shaping the future of child advocacy. Through the revitalization of the YLD Child Protection and Advocacy Committee (CPAC), young lawyers are finding meaningful ways to serve Georgia's most vulnerable children – and forging lasting partnerships to expand their impact.

Formerly known as the YLD Advocates for Students with Disabilities, the committee was renamed to reflect a broader mission: empowering attorneys who champion the rights of children not only in schools but across every corner of the child welfare system.

One of the most impactful initiatives of the year was a virtual CLE panel hosted in October, designed to inspire new attorneys to engage in pro bono child welfare work. With the support of the Child Protection and Advocacy Section (CPAS), this event reached over 50 attendees and featured speakers from the Office of the Child Advocate, Georgia Appleseed, the Safety Valve Project, the Truancy Intervention Project (TIP), and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). These leading advocates shared critical insights into how lawyers—especially young lawyers—can make real, lasting change in the lives of children.

In May, the committee turned its focus to another vital group: the caregivers who work on the front lines of child welfare every day. The “May the Wellness be with You: Caring for the Caregivers” event brought volunteers together to assemble and deliver wellness care packages to over 100 frontline professionals across 10 organizations in 7 counties.

This effort was a collaborative success led by the Child Protection and Advocacy Committee, the Community Service Projects Committee, and the Women in the Profession Committee. Volunteers brought time, heart, and hands-on support to this initiative—and the result was a powerful show of appreciation to those who support children every single day.

Outgoing YLD President Kenneth Mitchell celebrated the committee's success, sharing:

“I am truly inspired by the incredible work the YLD

Child Protection and Advocacy Committee is doing this year. Their efforts highlight the leadership and passion of our dedicated co-chairs – Ashley Horton, Danielle Simpson, and Zipporah Tillman. The work being done is a powerful reminder of the critical role child welfare plays across the state in ensuring the safety, stability, and well-being of Georgia's most vulnerable children.”

As part of a growing partnership, CPAS President Laurie Thomas extended a standing invitation for a YLD CPAS committee chair to serve on the CPAS Executive Committee, deepening the bridge between seasoned child advocates and the next generation of legal leaders.

The incoming YLD President is Veronica Cox. She steps into her presidential year with a bold vision: to celebrate the YLD by spotlighting service, expanding outreach, and empowering young lawyers across Georgia. A graduate of UGA and Mercer Law, Veronica has dedicated over 7 years to the YLD, previously serving as Legal Food Frenzy Co-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and President-Elect.

Veronica currently serves as a Trial Attorney at the EEOC and lives in Smyrna with her husband, two daughters, and two big dogs. Her deep passion for public service is matched by her commitment to building strong leadership within the YLD.

What began as a committee refresh has become a movement for impact. With powerful partnerships, dedicated leadership, and opportunities for service at every turn, the YLD's Child Protection and Advocacy Committee is proving that young lawyers can—and will—be the difference in the lives of Georgia's children.

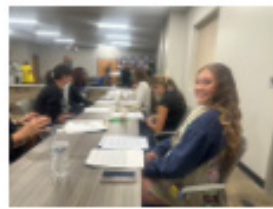
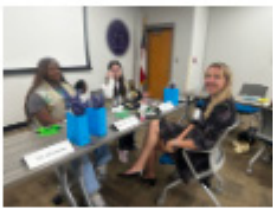
Together, the YLD and CPAS are not just creating connections.

They are building a legacy.

Girls Lead in the Law

By: Anissa Patton

On June 16 and 17, 2025, the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers and the GAWL Foundation in partnership with the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta presented the 23rd Annual “Girls Lead in Law” program at the Fulton County Juvenile Court. This two-day program provides Girl Scouts with invaluable insight into opportunities for women in legal careers. This year, more than 20 Girl Scouts participated from various troops throughout metro Atlanta. The Girl Scout participants toured courtrooms and met with Juvenile Court judges. Additionally, the Girl Scouts engaged a panel of seasoned attorneys and a panel of judges and hearing officers with deep probing questions about their career treks. When they weren’t touring or speaking with panelists, the Girl Scouts were hard at work under the tutelage of GAWL volunteers on their mock trial characters and scripts. The mock trial packet was developed by a GAWL volunteer and came with evidence and costumes that were provided by GAWL members and volunteers. This year’s mock trial was loosely based on the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. With the Hon. Elizabeth Ann Higgins-Brooks presiding and the parents serving as jurors, the culmination of all of the participants hard work resulted in a verdict of “Not Guilty.”





A Summary of This Year's Annual Meeting and CPAS CLE

By: Chris Hempling

This year's Child Protection and Advocacy Section's Annual Meeting and Continuing Legal Education was held on January 22, 2025. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, the program was held virtually instead of in-person as it was originally planned. Even with the modified format, the program brought together legal professionals throughout the state dedicated to improving outcomes for children in our juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Following the Section's annual meeting, the CLE began with an overview of professionalism and appellate case law presented by Melissa Carter and Christopher Church of the Barton Child Law and Policy Center at Emory University School of Law. Melissa and Christopher provided attendees key insights into recent appellate decisions impacting child welfare and discussed best practices for effective advocacy.

A panel on effective representation in delinquency proceedings followed, featuring Quintin Lewis, the Honorable Renata Turner, and Randee Waldman. The panel was moderated by Afiya Hinkson who

guided the discussion through topics that covered fair representation, the intersection of delinquency and child welfare, and the implementation of best practices in dependency proceedings.

The afternoon concluded with a panel on dependency proceedings, with insights from the Honorable Renata Turner, Jennifer Cline, Angela Tyner, Amber Walden, and Anissa Patton. During this panel, attendees gained valuable insights into effectively advocating for a child's best interest, stakeholder collaboration, and unique considerations for cases involving older youth or immigrant families.

If you were unable to attend this year's CLE, a recording of the program will be posted to the Child Protection and Advocacy Section website located on the State Bar of Georgia website. We hope you will be able to attend next year's Annual Meeting and CLE.



MAYA
First year
attorney

RUBY
Practicing law
for 30+ years

Find your
people.

Georgia Lawyers Helping Lawyers (LHL) is a confidential peer-to-peer program that provides colleagues who are suffering from stress, depression, addiction or other personal issues in their lives, with a fellow Bar member to be there, listen and help.

If you are looking for a peer or are interested in being a peer volunteer, visit www.GeorgiaLHL.org for more information.

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Spotlight on Anissa Patton, Winner of the 8th Annual Willie Lovett Award

By: Jill Roth, CWLS



On January 22, 2025, at the Child Protection & Advocacy Law Section's Annual Meeting, the 8th Annual Willie Lovett Award was presented to CPAS Executive Committee member Anissa Patton. The award is given to a State Bar of Georgia Child Protection & Advocacy Section member that has demonstrated outstanding service and dedication to child advocacy, as well as outstanding service in a non-law related community service organization.

Ms. Patton currently serves as Supervising Attorney in the Fulton County Office of the Child Attorney. One of the first National Association of Counsel for Children certified Child Welfare Legal Specialists in the state of Georgia, Ms. Patton has more than 20 years of legal experience serving a wide variety of roles related to child and protection advocacy, including stints as a prosecuting attorney, a state agency attorney, and an assistant public defender in juvenile courts. She has also served as a volunteer judge for teen court and an adjunct professor at Herzing University.

As a member of the Executive Committee of the Child Protection & Advocacy Section of the State Bar (CPAS),

Ms. Patton serves on several committees, always volunteering her time and knowledge in support of her community. She serves as the CPAS representative for the 6th Judicial District, which includes Coweta, Griffin, Clayton, Flint, and Towaliga County. Ms. Patton is a team player, always willing to lend a hand and to take on additional responsibilities.

Ms. Patton has conducted dozens of continuing legal education courses and has given lectures on a wide variety of child welfare topics, including LGBTQ+ advocacy. As the Georgia Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) expert for the Judicial Council of Georgia - Administrative Office of the Courts, Ms. Patton has travelled across the state educating the legal community about the requirements of ICWA.

Ms. Patton is an active member of several civic organizations and bar associations, including the Alumni Board of Davidson College, the Advisory Board of Directors for the Howard Warner-Newnan Coweta Boys and Girls Club, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, MECCA Chapter.

Ms. Patton has a passion for mentoring. In fall 2021, Ms. Patton developed the Msaada Mentorship Program in collaboration with staff from Davidson College's Office of Alumni and Family Engagement and the Matthews Center for Career Development. Msaada, which in Kiswahili means to be of help, matches Black students who identify as female with Black alumnae based upon the student's field of interest, professional aspirations, and career goals. Mentors commit to participate for at least one year, providing mentees with consistent career guidance, insight into their career field, networking opportunities, and professional encouragement. She serves as Director of Education and Training for the Rare Pearls of Coweta Mentoring Program and has served as a mentor with the Little Ladies of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women since 2022.

Ms. Patton has been recognized for her exceptional service to the field numerous times. In 2018, she received the Willie J. Lovett, Jr. Award for Outstanding Service to Children from the Fulton County Juvenile Court. In 2019, she received the Chief Justice P. Harris Hines Child Advocacy Award for Outstanding Attorney from the Georgia Supreme Court's Committee on Justice for Children. In October 2020, Ms. Patton was recognized by the American Bar Association as the Fearless Children's Lawyer of the Month for her advocacy for LGBTQ+ youth in foster care. In 2021, she received

the John W. Kuykendall Award for Community Service from her alma mater, Davidson College.

Ms. Patton exemplifies excellence and professionalism as an attorney and is active in professional and non-law related community service organizations. She serves as an example of the values Judge Lovett held dear. Please join me in thanking Ms. Patton for her outstanding service and dedication to the protection and advocacy of children!

The Honorable Talia Johnson Nurse: 2025 Willie Lovett Award Recipient

By: Tonya C. Boga, Esq. Attorney | Counselor | Mediator | JD, LLM



[Pictured: State Bar Past President Ivy N. Cadle, Judge Talia Johnson Nurse, EC Member Ira Foster, Justice Charles J. Bethel]

We are thrilled to announce that the recipient of the **2025 Willie Lovett Award for Advancing the Field of Juvenile Law** is **The Honorable Talia Johnson Nurse**, Associate Judge of the Juvenile Court of Douglas County! This prestigious award was presented at the annual State Bar Meeting in June.

Judge Johnson Nurse's distinguished career and unwavering commitment to child protection make her an exceptionally deserving honoree. Appointed to the bench on December 30, 2019, Judge Johnson Nurse is a twenty-year member in good standing of the Georgia Bar Association and a dedicated member of our Child Protection & Advocacy Law Section. Her expertise is further underscored by her certification as a child welfare law specialist through the National Association of Counsel for Children and her training in Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) from the Karyn Purvis

Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University.

Before her judicial appointment, Judge Talia Johnson Nurse spent a decade as the sole owner of the Law Office of Talia J. Nurse, LLC, where she passionately represented parents and children in dependency and delinquency cases, advocating fiercely as a Guardian Ad Litem. Always seeking to refine her skills, Judge Johnson Nurse is at the forefront of emerging trends impacting juveniles. She was the driving force behind the piloting of an adultification bias training program for judges, developed by the Georgetown Law Center on Gender Justice and Opportunity. This critical training aims to combat biases that lead to harsher outcomes for Black girls within the criminal justice system.

In addition to her regular caseload, Judge Johnson Nurse jointly presides over Douglas County's Family Treatment Court and the CHANCE Court for adolescents. Through these vital programs, she focuses on helping families rebuild from the impact of substance use and mental illness and empowers young people to achieve their best selves.

Beyond the courtroom, Judge Johnson Nurse is a deeply engaged community leader. As an active member of the judicial section of the Gate City Bar Association, she dedicates her time to initiatives like reading to elementary school students during Read Across America Week and speaking at career day events. As a Silver Star and Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., she has been instrumental in establishing the Legacy of Pearls Foundation, Inc. and the Preeminent Pearls Foundation, Inc., which provide scholarships to Georgia high school students and collect essential items for women and children in domestic violence shelters. Her impactful contributions earned her the 2024 Public Policy Award from the Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Northwest Georgia Chapter.

Please join us in congratulating The Honorable Talia Johnson Nurse on this well-deserved recognition! Her dedication truly embodies the spirit of the Willie Lovett Award.

2025 Annual Youth and The Law Summit

By: Jill Roth, CWLS



On April 19, 2025, Fulton County Juvenile Court, in partnership with the State Bar of Georgia Child Protection and Advocacy Section, Gate City Bar Association, YouthSpark, Atlanta's John Marshall Law School, and Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete, LLP, hosted the 18th Annual Youth and the Law Summit. The theme was "The Power of CommYOUity – I am because we are!" The event was well attended. Youth and parents participated in breakout sessions and a number of community resource providers attended so that youth could sign up for programs on the spot. CPAS Executive Committee Chair Laurie Thomas-Williams and EC Member Quintin Lewis engaged youth in a spirited discussion about the importance of carefully choosing the words we use.

Gate City Bar Association Awards R. Preston Herndon Service Award



[Pictured Karlise Y. Grier and Laurie Thomas Williams]

Child Protection and Advocacy Section member Karlise Grier received the R. Preston Herndon Service Award presented by the Gate City Bar Association.

Gault Center Southern Region Summit

By: Randee Waldman



[Pictured: Gault Center Southern Region Law Summit Georgia Attendees]

This June, CPAS provided support to the Gault Center's Southern Youth Defender Center Regional Summit in Asheville, North Carolina. 16 youth defenders from Georgia joined their colleagues from Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Statewide Youth Justice Convening

The Statewide Youth Justice Convening was held on November 7, 2024, at the Anderson Conference Center in Macon, Georgia. The Barton Clinic, DJJ and Voices for Georgia's Children participated in the event.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

The **2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)** and the **2024 Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR)** is available for review. They can be found at <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/data/federal-reviews-and-plans>. This site includes information on Georgia's child welfare plans, annual reports, federal reviews, state assessments, related resources, and the safety response system being piloted in Georgia.

Georgia Appleseed:

Reminder of the work Georgia Appleseed is doing through our FAIR (Fairness, Advocacy, and Individualized Representation) Project. We support children across Georgia facing **long-term suspension or expulsion** by providing **Community Advocacy Support (CAS)** and **direct legal representation** to help families navigate the tribunal process and advocate for alternatives to exclusionary discipline.

Inform families about the advocacy support Georgia Appleseed can provide. To make a referral you may do so at www.disciplinehelp.org. Access our resources and training modules at www.TribunalHelp.org.

We appreciate your partnership and look forward to working with you to support Georgia's children and families. Please let us know if you have any questions or ideas for collaboration.

Tanesse Brown

Program Manager

Direct: (678) 426-4640

tbrown@gaappleseed.org | www.gaappleseed.org

National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC):

Top leaders in child welfare law are coming together again for the National Association of Counsel for Children's 48th National Child Welfare Law Conference, which will take place August 11-13 in Cleveland, Ohio. This is a critical time for community, information-sharing, and dialogue as NACC continues to enhance the practice of child welfare law and advance justice and equity. Learn more and register at [NACC Conference Registration](#)

The Summit: Georgia's Child Welfare Conference:

The Summit, Georgia's Child Welfare Conference, will take place December 3-5, 2025, at the Alpharetta Conference Center at the Hotel at Avalon. Hosted by the Georgia Office for the Child Advocate, Supreme Court of Georgia's Committee on Justice for Children, Georgia CASA, the Barton Center for Child Law and Policy, and the UGA Law CEASE Clinic, the event will bring together a diverse array of professionals involved in child protection and advocacy. Save the date!

Child Protection and Advocacy Section Annual Meeting & CLE: Save the Date!

When: January 22, 2026, from 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Where: State Bar of Georgia

What: Mark your calendars now to join the CPAS annual meeting and CLE!

Registration information will be distributed by the State Bar in late November 2025, and will be available on the CPAS website near the beginning of 2026. [Child Protection and Advocacy Section Website](#)

Student Attendance and School Climate Committees

Georgia law OCGA § 20-2-690.2 requires that every county's Superior Court create a committee to improve school climate, student attendance, and school safety. Committees must 1) create and adopt a school attendance protocol and 2) make recommendations on how to increase attendance, safety, and community support. The purpose is to:



Reduce the number of unexcused absences



Increase the % of students present for state-mandated testing



Improve school climate in each school



Reduce the number of students who are chronically absent

**On April 28th, 2025
Governor Brian P. Kemp
signed SB123
overhauling Student
Attendance and School
Climate Committees**

Public schools are prohibited from expelling students solely due to absenteeism, promoting a more supportive approach to attendance issues.

A student is considered "chronically absent" if they miss 10% or more of the school year.

School systems with a chronic absenteeism rate of at least 10%, or individual schools with rates at or above 15%, are required to establish attendance review teams

Key Dates - SB 123

NOV 25, 2025

COMMITTEES MUST MEET BY THIS DATE, AND THEN, AT LEAST TWICE ANNUALLY THERE AFTER

JUN 1, 2026

COMMITTEES SHALL ADOPT WRITTEN STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOLS

NOV 1, 2026

GADOE MUST SUBMIT REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE BODY DETAILING COUNTY-LEVEL COMPLIANCE AND DATA

Creating Your Local Student Attendance and School Climate Committee Details

Below are additional details to assist with creating an Student Attendance and School Climate Committee. This list is not exclusive. For additional support, please see the contacts listed below.

Call to Action

See OCGA § 20-2-690.2 for a list of required committee members, including the superior court chief judge, juvenile court, law enforcement, school officials, and others

Review Data

Check out <https://georgiainsights.gadoe.org/Dashboards/Pages/default.aspx> for Attendance, School Climate, and Whole Child Health data

Identify Protocol

Every school will look different, but schools will have various protocols which should be reviewed. Reach out to your local superintendent.

Map Services

Mapping what is available is the first step to matching your students' and families' needs with what's available. This will also allow you to map the gaps in services needed.

Have Questions? Ask one of the experts.

Dr. Garry McGiboney

Garry.McGiboney@healthsecuritydynamics.com

Phone/Text: 404-664-3286

Mary Kathryn Velazquez, JD

mkvelazquez@gaappleseed.org

(678) 336-7172

Susan McLaren, MPH, FACHE

smclaren@gsu.edu

404-413-0076

Justice & School Related Resources

Below are additional links and resources to assist with data gathering for justice and school related information. This list is not exclusive.

GaDOE State-Level Contact

Due to staffing changes, at this time please email all questions regarding GaDOE and School Attendance and School Climate Committees to wholechild@doe.k12.ga.us

DOE Local-Level Contact

The Director of Student Services and/or the Lead Social worker will be the best local point of contact for School Attendance and School Climate Committees. This can be found via the internet.

Discipline Data

The GOSA's K-12 Student Discipline Dashboard offers district- and school-level discipline data for all public schools in Georgia from 2014-2024.
<https://public.gosa.ga.gov/noauth/extensions/DisciplineDashV1/DisciplineDashV1.html>

Attendance Data *

The GaDOE Georgia Insights Attendance Dashboard has statewide data from 2018-2024. This provides the % of students who are chronically absent.
<https://georgiainsights.gadoe.org/Dashboards/Pages/Attendance.aspx>

Justice Data

The Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse collects data from multiple agencies for State and Federal reporting requirements, to determine equitable distribution of resources, and to inform program and policy analysis.

<https://juveniledata.georgiacourts.gov/>

The Georgia JDEX is a statewide juvenile data repository that has created various data dashboards. Although access is limited to Juvenile Court Judges and designated staff.

<https://georgiacourts.gov/jdex/>

*The local school district would have the most up to date data.

Child Protection & Advocacy Section Scholarships

The Child Protection and Advocacy Section of the State Bar of Georgia will offer three scholarships in the amount of up to \$750 per scholarship each year. These funds may be used for either registration fees or travel expenses for an out-of-town conference or seminar related to child welfare or family law. The scholarships will be awarded to current members of CPAS who demonstrate both a need for financial assistance and the relevance of the content area of the conference or seminar to the work conducted by the attorney. Please click the following link to access the Scholarship Application: [Child Protection and Advocacy Section](#).

State Bar of Georgia Child Protection and Advocacy Law Section Scholarship Application

The Child Protection and Advocacy Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia will offer three (3) scholarships in the amount of up to \$750 per scholarship each year. These funds may be used for either registration fees or travel expenses for an out-of-town conference or seminar.

The scholarships will be awarded to members of the Section who demonstrate both a need for financial assistance and a demonstration of the relevance of the content area of the conference or seminar to the work conducted by the attorney.

Commitment to Share Information:

Scholarship recipients agree that they will write an article for the Section newsletter, Kids Matter, regarding a topic covered at the conference or seminar.

Application Process:

Application Periods: There will be three application periods each year, with one scholarship awarded during each application period. The application periods are as follows:

January 1 – April 30 (scholarship awarded by May 31)

May 1 – August 31 (scholarship awarded by September 30)

September 1 – December 31 (scholarship awarded by January 31)

Application: The attached application form, including a statement of need and copy of the agenda, must be completed and returned to the scholarship committee by the appropriate application period close date.

Applications should be returned to maryjos@gabar.org.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

State Bar of Georgia

**Child Protection and Advocacy Law Section Scholarship
Application**

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

EMAIL: _____

Description of Program You Wish to Attend: (Please attach a copy of the program agenda, if available.)

Program Title: _____

Program Location: _____

Program Dates: _____

Program Costs: _____

Statement of Need: (Include any financial contributions provided by your organization, relevance of the seminar to your work, etc. You may attach a separate letter, on your organization's letterhead, with your statement of need.)
