

NACC

National Association
of Counsel for Children

48TH NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE LAW CONFERENCES

**2025
CLEVE
LAND+
ONLINE**



**CLEVELAND,
OHIO**

AUG 11-13, 2025

Pre-Conference Aug 10

**Hilton Cleveland
Downtown**

BOOK NOW!



ONLINE

NOV 12-14, 2025

NACCchildlaw.org

**Conference@
[NACCchildlaw.org](mailto:Conference@NACCchildlaw.org)**

Catalysts for Change: Innovating Advocacy through Power Sharing and Transformational Leadership

THE CONFERENCE

The annual conferences bring together professionals from child welfare law and intersecting fields and further NACC's mission by exchanging ideas, information, and collective efforts.

The theme of this year's conference is *Catalysts for Change: Innovating Advocacy through Power Sharing and Transformational Leadership*. This theme underscores the need to rethink traditional advocacy models, actively share power, and harness the creativity and resourcefulness of all involved in child welfare systems to drive lasting, meaningful practice and policy reform.

Conference sessions are designed for a national audience, including attorneys who represent children, parents, agencies, and kinship caregivers, as well as judges and multidisciplinary professionals working in child welfare. Sessions will expand attendees' understanding of the law, provide practical tools, and lend information and strategies for systems improvement.

ABOUT NACC



Founded in 1977, the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) is a nonprofit professional membership and advocacy organization dedicated to advancing justice for children, youth, and families. NACC has led the evolution of child welfare law from a cause to a profession by establishing child welfare as a specialty field requiring distinctive training, skills, and support. NACC trains and certifies attorneys who represent children, families, and agencies; supports a diverse community of professionals; and advocates for policy reform alongside young people and families. NACC helps lawyers provide quality legal representation to children, parents, and agencies, and advances policies that protect the rights of children, youth, and parents impacted by the child welfare system. Accredited by the American Bar Association to certify attorneys as Child Welfare Law Specialists (CWLS), NACC is nationally renowned in the legal community and the child welfare sector.

Our Mission

NACC advances children’s and parents’ rights by supporting a diverse, inclusive community of child welfare lawyers to provide zealous legal representation and by advocating for equitable, anti-racist solutions co-designed by people with lived experience.

Our Vision

Every child, parent, and family is well-supported in their community and has equitable access to justice through culturally responsive, client-centered legal representation.



THE HOTEL

We are pleased to have our onsite conference at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown.

Hilton Cleveland Downtown
100 Lakeside Avenue East
Cleveland, OH 44114



THE CITY

Cleveland is a vibrant city that blends rich history, cultural attractions, and outdoor adventures. Nestled on the shores of Lake Erie, the city is home to the world-famous Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and a thriving food scene with top-notch restaurants and local breweries. Sports fans can catch a game at Progressive Field or Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse, while nature lovers can explore the scenic trails of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park just outside the city. With its mix of urban charm and natural beauty, Cleveland offers something for everyone!

SPONSOR, EXHIBIT, ADVERTISE



Sponsorship, exhibiting, and advertising are excellent ways to promote your organization, products, and services to a wide range of multidisciplinary legal professionals serving children and families.

We offer the option to designate all or a portion of your sponsorship to scholarships for attendees with financial need, who are students, and/or who advance diversity in the child welfare legal profession.

 **CLEVELAND | PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

Onsite at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown

REGISTER NOW! 

ONSITE Pre-Conference : Sunday, Aug 10, 2025


9:00am – 4:30pm **Red Book Training**

PRESENTER **BETSY FORDYCE, JD, CWLS** – Upstream Shifts, LLC

The Red Book Training is NACC's signature training, designed to provide a comprehensive overview of child welfare law and practice as well as to assist attorneys in preparing for the Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) certification exam. This one-day training is based on the 4th edition of *Child Welfare Law and Practice: Representing Children, Parents, and Agencies in Neglect, Abuse, and Dependency Cases* – more commonly known as the Red Book.

The training will cover the following areas of the Red Book, as well as practice exam questions:

- Overarching Legal Structure and Themes
- Legal Case from Beginning to End
- Discrete Issues
- Lawyering Roles
- Essential Lawyering Skills

Separate registration required  **Box lunch included**

9:00am – 4:30pm **Red Book Training Tier 2: Trial Skills for Child Welfare Attorneys**


PRESENTERS **SHANNON FELDER, JD, CWLS** – National Association of Counsel for Children
JOSEPHINE VANDERHORST, JD, CWLS – National Association of Counsel for Children

Take your trial advocacy skills to the next level with RBT Tier 2: Trial Skills for Child Welfare Attorneys – an exclusive training designed to elevate trial practice for child welfare attorneys, including agency attorneys, prosecutors, parent attorneys, GAL attorneys, and children's attorneys. This intensive program distills key principles from Chapters 35 and 36 of the Red Book (*Child Welfare Law and Practice, 4th Edition*), providing you with essential strategies to enhance your courtroom performance. Learn how to conduct effective examinations and navigate evidentiary issues with confidence. Don't miss this opportunity to strengthen your advocacy and deliver better outcomes for children and families.

- **Prerequisite:** Completion of the in-person Red Book Training or online Red Book Training Course (Tier 1) or CWLS Certification

Topics to be covered:

- Strategic Witness Preparation – Techniques to enhance witness credibility and confidence.
- Maximizing Pretrial Motions and Stipulations – Leveraging procedural tools to strengthen your case before trial.
- Mastering Direct and Cross-Examination of Fact Witnesses – Effective questioning strategies with emphasis on testimony by parents and agency social workers.
- Expert Witness Examination Techniques – Building and challenging expert testimony to support your case.
- Evidence Essentials: Admissibility and Objections – Navigating evidentiary rules to protect and present key evidence.
- Navigating Child Testimony – Handling the complexities of questioning child witnesses with care and sensitivity.

Separate registration required  **Box lunch included** · **Limited to 40 attendees; no more than 5 per group**

5:00pm – 6:00pm **CWLS Reception**

6:00pm – 8:30pm **Self-Compassion Hike - Sponsored by Casey Family Programs**

Back for a second year is our Self-Compassion Hike experience offered by our friends at Casey Family Programs. This experience will be a safe and stress-free way to spend an evening while at Conference. Our sponsors arrange everything, including transportation to a tranquil location where we can enjoy and experience nature, a boxed dinner, and a brief discussion on the benefits of nature experiences and connecting with our colleagues. Research is clear that humans benefit from time in nature, calming our minds and stimulating the senses. We also hope you will have some chats if you choose to meet new people, but also make room for silence if that is what you need on your walk.

Important details: This experience is not intended to be a vigorous hike and so if you are looking for a serious burn, this one may not be for you. We will walk at a comfortable pace. The distance will be reasonable for about an hour's time, but it can be shortened at any time with no worries. You will need comfortable shoes and water. You may want to consider long sleeves for bug-bite prevention. Temperatures average between 62–81 degrees.

[Separate registration required for this free, limited-capacity event](#) 
Meet in the lobby at 6:00pm; leaving promptly at 6:15pm

ONSITE Conference Day One : Monday, Aug 11, 2025

7:30am - 5:30pm **Registration Desk Open**

8:00am – 5:00pm **Exhibits**

8:00am – 8:30am **Breakfast**

8:30am – 10:15am **Welcome and Plenary 1**

10:15am – 10:45am **Break**

10:45am – 12:15pm **Breakout Session A**

12:30pm -1:45pm **Lunch / TBA**

2:00pm – 3:30pm **Breakout Session B**

3:30pm – 4:00pm **Break**

4:00pm – 5:30pm **Plenary 2**

5:30pm – 6:30pm **Welcome Reception**



ONSITE Conference Day Two : Tuesday, Aug 12, 2025

7:30am - 5:30pm **Registration Desk Open**

8:00am - 5:00pm **Exhibits**

8:00am - 8:30am **Breakfast**

8:30am - 10:00am **Plenary 3**

10:00am -10:30am **Break**

10:30am - 12:00pm **Breakout Session C**

12:15pm - 1:45pm **Annual Luncheon and Awards**

2:00pm -3:30pm **Breakout Session D**

3:30pm - 4:00pm **Break**

4:00pm - 5:30pm **Breakout Session E**

6:00pm - 10:00pm **Evening Event**

ONSITE Conference Day Three : Wednesday, Aug 13, 2025

7:30am - 12:00pm **Registration Desk open**

8:00am - 12:00pm **Exhibits**

8:00am - 8:30am **Breakfast**

8:30am - 10:00am **Plenary 4**

10:00am -10:30am **Break**

10:30am - 12:00pm **Closing Plenary 5**



ONLINE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

From the comfort of your home or office

[REGISTER NOW!](#)

ONLINE Conference Day 1: Wednesday, Nov 12, 2025

All Times Eastern Standard

11:00am - 12:45pm **Welcome and Online Plenary 1**

1:15pm - 2:45pm **Online Breakout A**

3:15pm - 4:45pm **Online Breakout B**

5:15pm - 6:45pm **Online Plenary 2**

ONLINE Conference Day 2: Thursday, Nov 13, 2025

All Times Eastern Standard

10:00am - 11:30am **Online Breakout C**

12:00pm - 1:30pm **Online Breakout D**

2:00pm - 3:30pm **Online Plenary 3**

4:00pm - 5:30pm **Online Breakout E**

ONLINE Conference Day 3: Friday, Nov 14, 2025

All Times Eastern Standard

10:00am - 11:30am **Online Plenary 4**

12:00pm - 1:30pm **Online Breakout F**

2:00pm - 3:30pm **Online Plenary 5**

4:00pm - 5:00pm **Closing and Awards**



**REGISTER NOW
SAVE \$100**

**EARLY REGISTRATION
IS NOW OPEN**

CLEVELAND, OH : AUG 11-13, 2025
PRE-CONFERENCE AUG 10

ONLINE : NOV 12-14, 2025

CLEVELAND REGISTRATION REGISTER NOW TO SAVE \$100! [↗](#)

ONSITE AT THE HILTON CLEVELAND DOWNTOWN

	THROUGH 6/30/2025	STARTING 7/1/2025
CWLS	\$ 475	\$ 475
NACC Member	\$ 500	\$ 600
Nonmember	\$ 700	\$ 800

CLEVELAND ADD-ON EVENTS (MORE TO COME!)

PRE-CONFERENCE RED BOOK TRAINING

NACC Member	\$ 225
Nonmember	\$ 300

PRE-CONFERENCE RED BOOK TRAINING TIER 2: TRIAL SKILLS FOR CHILD WELFARE ATTORNEYS

CWLS and NACC Member	\$ 495	\$ 550
Nonmember	\$ 575	\$ 645

SELF-COMPASSION HIKE · SPONSORED BY CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

	Free
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ONLINE REGISTRATION REGISTER NOW TO SAVE \$100! [↗](#)

FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME OR OFFICE

	THROUGH 9/30/2025	STARTING 10/1/2025
CWLS	\$ 275	\$ 275
NACC Member	\$ 300	\$ 400
Nonmember	\$ 500	\$ 600

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**WE ARE
 NACC**

**TOGETHER WE ARE
 PROMOTING EXCELLENCE
 BUILDING COMMUNITY
 ADVANCING JUSTICE**

**SAVE THE
DATES FOR
2026 & 2027!**



2026

**August 11
thru August 13**
Pre-Conference Aug 10
Portland, Oregon



2027

**August 5
thru August 7**
Pre-Conference Aug 4
Denver, Colorado

