

Judicial Engagement and Judicial Leadership

Hon. Jason Rossell
Kenosha County Circuit Court

Hon. Edward Vlack
St. Croix County Circuit Court

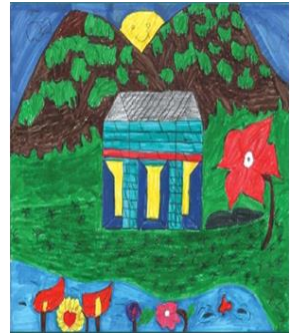
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“As a court and as a system ... we cannot do any less than what we expect our families to do. That means that we must periodically review our practices and core beliefs to make changes as needed to be as effective as possible to help our families.”

Hon. Elizabeth G. Crnkovich
Douglas County Nebraska Juvenile Court

Judicial Leadership – The Big Picture

- Families are strengthened with collaborative systems of support
- Children remain safely in their home whenever possible
- Children in out-of-home care achieve timely permanence with enduring connections



*A Home Would be Heaven –
Silvia, Age 13, foster youth
From Foster Youth Art Initiative, Texas
Department of Family and Protective Services*

Judicial Leadership – Strategies for Improving Outcomes

1. See the big picture
2. Focus on the children and families coming before the court
3. Emphasize collegial discussion with community partners
4. Acknowledge judicial discretion
5. Own the data, own the outcomes
6. Share results with stakeholders
7. Use continuous quality improvement cycle

www.ncsc.org/services-and-experts/areas-of-expertise/children-and-families/child-protection-outcomes

Engagement – On & Off the Bench

- Engaging case participants in hearings
- Creating policies and procedures to enhance participation
- Overseeing performance of court related services
- Being aware of services in the community
- Utilizing child welfare and court data to inform practice and policies
- Convening and/or participating in multi-disciplinary groups to improve policies and procedures
- Court-appointed Special Advocates under § 48.07(5)

Judicial Engagement – Examples

- Convene Judicial Engagement Team (JET) or similar multi-disciplinary group
- Establish model court (e.g., Unified Family Court) or treatment court (e.g., Family Drug Treatment Court, Healthy Infant Court)
- Organize “lunch and learns” or other training for judicial officers, attorneys, and/or caseworkers
- Meet with new caseworkers or provide mock court opportunities
- Develop policy for youth attending court
- Create MOU for GALs with minimum standards
- Implement project to expedite permanency (e.g., Tailored Dispositional Orders Project, permanency project to examine resources and delays)

Judicial Engagement – Examples

- What other examples do you have from your county?
- Do you have any additional ideas?

Closing Thoughts

Any closing thoughts from the presenters or participants?