

Protecting Childhood: Ensuring Justice and Advocacy in the Legal System
Children in the Courts Conference
May 4-7, 2026

Monday, May 4th- *CASA only (No CLE; CME (*) denoted)*

| TIME | CASA Directors | CASA Staff | CASA Volunteers |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Registration | | |
| 1:00 – 2:30 | Welcome and Updates from Child Welfare Leadership -Janet Bledsoe, AAL Program Director; Daniel Brightwell, Deputy Chief Counsel, OCC; Brooke Steen, AOC Juvenile Division Director; Brian Welch, Parent Counsel Director; Tiffany Wright, DCFS Director | | |
| 2:30 – 2:45 | BREAK | | |
| 2:45 – 3:45 | Director Development Workshop Laura Edwards, Sonata Venture Solutions | Artificial Intelligence in Advocacy -Shane O’Barr, AOC Applications Training Specialist | Brain Development and Behavior* Amanda Childs, LCSW; Community Services, Inc. |
| 3:45 – 4:00 | BREAK | | |
| 4:00– 5:15 | Workshop Continued | Accessing Treatment Resources -Kira Kennedy, OSAMH, DHS | |
| 5:30 | <i>Welcome Reception in Atrium for CASA</i> | | |

Tuesday, May 5th 5.25 CLE Hours (All approved for DN; Ethics (E) and CME (*) denoted)

| TIME | CASA Directors | CASA Staff and Volunteers | Attorneys and Judges |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 – 10:15 | Workshop Continued | Building Relationships with Neurodiverse Caregivers and Youth -Dr. Sufna John, UAMS | Registration for DN attorneys and judges |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | BREAK | | |
| 10:30 – 12:00 | Workshop Continued | Legal Advice v. Legal Information* -Krystal Mann and Laura Calhoun, AOC Staff Attorneys Rock Island IV-VII | Welcome and Updates from Leadership -Janet Bledsoe, AAL Program Director; Daniel Brightwell, Deputy Chief Counsel, OCC; Brooke Steen, AOC Juvenile Division Director; Brian Welch, Parent Counsel Director; Tiffany Wright, DCFS Director |
| 12:00-1:00 | <i>LUNCH (provided)</i> | | <i>Judges will convene during lunch in Junction I-II</i> |
| 1:00-2:00 | Workshop Continued | Situational Safety and Court Security -Brent Scott, AOC Director of Security and Emergency Preparedness | |
| 2:00-2:15 | BREAK | CASA Adjourns | BREAK |
| 2:15-3:30 | Workshop Continued (Directors will adjourn following the workshop) | | Choose Your Own Ethical Adventure (E) -Moderated by Krystal Mann, Staff Attorney AOC |
| 3:30-3:45 | BREAK | | |
| 3:45-5:15 | Dependency-Neglect Appellate Update* -Marc Tave, OCC; Judge Tjuana Byrd Manning, Juvenile Judge, 6 th Judicial District; Elizabeth James, Parent Counsel | | |
| 5:30 | <i>Welcome Reception in Atrium for Attorneys and Judges</i> | | |

Wednesday, May 6th 6.5 hours (all sessions approved for DR and DN; Ethics (E) and CME (*) denoted)

| TIME | Rock Island I-III | Rock Island IV-VII |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Registration for DR and DN Attorneys and Judges | |
| 9:00 – 10:15 | Finish Empty -Jason Curry | |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | BREAK | |
| 10:30 – 12:00 | Accountability and Honest Dialogue with Clients (E) - Dr. Sufna John, UAMS | |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | LUNCH (provided) | Judges will convene during lunch in Junction I-II |
| 1:00-2:15 | Choose your Own Evidentiary Adventure -Moderated by Krystal Mann, Staff Attorney AOC | |
| 2:15 – 2:30 | BREAK | |
| 2:30 – 3:45 | Accessing Treatment Resources -Kira Kennedy, OSAMH, DHS | |
| 3:45-4:00 | BREAK | |
| 4:00-5:15 | Cybersecurity Awareness* -Dain Couch, AOC Judicial Chief IT Security Officer | Domestic Violence: Impacts on Families and Children, Indicators of Abuse, and Family Dynamics* -Kiah Hall, University of Arkansas |
| 5:30 | Welcome Reception in Atrium for Attorneys and Judges | |

Thursday, May 7th 6.00 hours (all sessions approved for DR and DN; Ethics (E) and CME (*) denoted)

| TIME | Rock Island I-III | Rock Island IV-VII |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Registration | |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | The Power of Artificial Intelligence in the Courts (E)* -One North/TEKSystems Company | |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | BREAK | |
| 10:15 – 11:15 (5-minute break) | Advocating for Services for Youth with Developmental Disabilities or Behavioral Health Needs -Derek Henderson, Disability Rights Arkansas | AI Training to Empower Attorneys and Judges (Part I)* -One North/TEKSystems Company |
| 11:20 – 12:15 | DN Appellate Update- Quick Run Through* -Laura Calhoun and Kurt Meredith, AOC Staff Attorneys | AI Training to Empower Attorneys and Judges (Part II)* -One North/TEKSystems Company |
| 12:15 – 1:00 | LUNCH (provided) | |
| 1:00 – 2:30 | A Psychiatrist's Guide to Family Addiction -Dr. Jason Beaman, Chair, School of Forensic Sciences, Oklahoma State University | |
| 2:30 – 2:45 | BREAK | |
| 2:45 – 4:15 | Domestic Relations and Probate Appellate Update* -Angela Mann, Attorney Mann and Kemp | |
| 4:15 | Adjourn | |