



Making the Legal System Work for Children and Parents

Implementing FJI System Attributes

Attribute 2: Interdisciplinary Practice Model

This guide is one in a series providing guidance on implementing the six system attributes in the [FJI Attributes of High-Quality Legal Representation](#). View the other [implementation guides](#).

Attribute 2: Interdisciplinary Practice Model

- Ensure attorneys have access to work in an integrated manner with interpreters, experts, social workers, and investigators, as needed.
- Ensure attorneys have access to work in an integrated manner with parent allies/peer parent mentors and youth advocates/youth ambassadors, as needed.

Meeting This Attribute

Families involved in the child welfare system are in crisis. While zealous in-court advocacy is key to protecting family integrity and child safety, families often need more to successfully reunify and cope with the range of issues and trauma that accompany child abuse and neglect cases. To address these complex needs and improve outcomes for children and families, FJI recommends attorneys have access to an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary¹ model of representation when possible.²

Create team diversity.

With an interdisciplinary approach, attorneys have access to a team of professionals who can work on the case and support parent or child clients. There are various ways to approach interdisciplinary representation. Teams may consist of attorneys and social workers or other social services professionals but can also include parent allies/mentors, youth ambassadors or peer advocates, investigators, experts, interpreters,³ clinicians, and support staff. Child welfare attorneys representing parents or children may also benefit from collaborating with other legal

services attorneys handling special education, public benefits, housing, or criminal law matters that may affect the shared client population. Ideally, the team members should reflect the diversity of the community they serve.

Promote legal-social work collaboration.

Interdisciplinary models involving social work and legal collaboration can give clients the benefit of multiple perspectives and skill sets. Social workers can support parent clients by helping them access housing, mental health, and other stabilizing services, engage in services, and strategize regarding reunification or other permanency plans for their children.⁴ Similarly, social workers can help child clients by relieving barriers to reunification, engaging child clients in their cases, assessing family members and other placement or permanency options, and ensuring the child's individual needs are met through services or other supports. Interdisciplinary practice brings a variety of viewpoints and areas of expertise to the case, which can lead to stronger strategies, more effective litigation, and extra support for child and parent clients.

One of the earliest examples of interdisciplinary parent representation is the NYU Family Defense Clinic.⁵ After the professors teaching the clinic learned how much out-of-court work was necessary to successfully advocate for parents, the clinic began partnering with social work students to create interdisciplinary teams for each case.⁶ A previous clinic faculty member shared that after social workers joined the team, “we were able to serve our clients more fully as individuals. As lawyers and social workers working together, we were able to better understand each family’s unique strengths and needs as well as consider both legal and nonlegal strategies for advancing our clients’ goals.”⁷ With social workers as partners, the clinic could better participate in agency conferences, assess agency service plans, and create alternative plans based on each family’s specific needs to give the families the best chance for safe and successful reunification.⁸ This example also highlights how partnering with local university social work programs can achieve an interdisciplinary approach when resources are limited.

Know the benefits of interdisciplinary representation.

A growing body of evidence supports the efficacy of interdisciplinary models of parent and child representation. For example, a multi-year study published in 2019 examined the outcomes of 9,582 families involved with the child welfare system in New York City. It found that children of parents who were represented by an interdisciplinary law office spent almost four months less in foster care and achieved permanency, including reunification, and guardianship faster than children of parents who received solo attorney representation.⁹ Other studies have also found a positive impact for interdisciplinary teams representing children. A Flint, Michigan study found interdisciplinary teams support case resolution and family preservation through a greater likelihood of case dismissal at adjudication, an increased likelihood of placement with relatives instead of foster care, and a decrease in termination of parental rights petitions.¹⁰

Devise a plan for resolving conflicts.

Because interdisciplinary models of representation require collaboration between colleagues with different training, perspectives, and ethical or licensure obligations,¹¹ challenges and conflicts can sometimes arise.

Mandated reporting. The potential clash between a social worker’s status as a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect and an attorney’s duty of client confidentiality may pose one such challenge.¹² To maintain full client confidentiality and fulfill the primary goal of high-quality legal representation for parents and children, social workers collaborating with parent or child attorneys should be relieved of their mandatory reporting duty. In the District of Columbia, for example, social workers are not mandatory reporters when they are performing social work services exclusively for a lawyer or law firm engaged in legal representation.¹³ In Louisiana, a social worker who is “engaged by an attorney to assist in the rendition of professional legal services” to a child in a dependency case is exempt from the mandatory reporting requirement.¹⁴ Clear statutory exemptions such as these are ideal to support collaboration when providing legal services.

Unfortunately, in many states, the interplay between mandatory reporting requirements and legal ethics rules creates ambiguity for social workers employed by legal organizations. In determining how to implement high-quality interdisciplinary practice models, jurisdictions should consult state and local statutes regarding mandatory reporting, attorney rules of professional conduct, and social work licensure standards and ethical obligations. Some interdisciplinary clinics and law offices contend that social workers in interdisciplinary practices are part of the legal team and thus subject to the same client confidentiality requirements as attorneys.¹⁵ Others have instituted policies that require advising each client of mandated reporting requirements of team members or possibly avoiding use of mandated reporters in cases where a conflict may be apparent. However, despite the potential for conflict, interdisciplinary practices report confidentiality issues are infrequent and usually resolved in a way acceptable to all team members.¹⁶ A key to resolving this issue when it does arise is having client-centered policies and procedures in place to assess perceived risk and deciding as a team how to best advise the client given the circumstances.¹⁷

Social worker testimony. Additionally, jurisdictions seeking to create interdisciplinary legal practices should consider whether and how social workers will testify on behalf of their clients or be subject to subpoenas to testify issued by opposing counsel.

Issues of privilege and ethical obligations may affect these proceedings; jurisdictions should consult relevant authorities, including state statutes, professional regulations, ethics opinions, and case law when needed.

Examples of Good Practice

The following examples represent interdisciplinary practice models that have pioneered the approach for representing children and families in child welfare cases. Many other successful models exist.

Interdisciplinary Child Representation Models

Children’s Law Center of California (CLC)

CLC is a nonprofit, public interest law firm that represents children involved with dependency court due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. CLC finds that a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to advocacy is essential to serving this high-risk, high-needs population.

Social work investigator support. CLC has five law firms in Southern California and two in Northern California, including one firm that functions as a specialty unit. Each firm employs social work investigators to assist attorneys on cases, with one investigator for every two attorneys. Investigators assist with work outside of court, such as visiting the child in the home or attending transition meetings.

Specialty unit teams. In the specialty unit, interdisciplinary teams of specialists work on cases for dual status youth, mental health advocacy, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), special education advocacy, and non-minor dependents in extended foster care. For example:

- the Mental Health Advocacy Team (MHAT) consists of a clinician and an attorney with a strong mental health background;
- the Cross-over Advocacy Resource Effort (CARE) features social workers, attorney supervisors, case managers, and interns from local universities’ social work programs;
- Peer Advocates and Transition Age Youth (TAY) specialists are younger staff who have experienced foster care and excel at connecting with hard-to-reach youth.

Technical Assistance

FJI team members are available to help implement the FJI attributes.

Visit the [Family Justice Initiative website](#) for more information.

The Peer Advocates and TAY specialists, MHAT and CARE teams are available to consult on specific issues or general case planning and strategy for any child or non-minor dependent represented by CLC, regardless of which firm or unit has primary case assignment and responsibility.

Interagency collaboration. In addition to social work investigator support and the specialty unit teams, CLC’s interdisciplinary approach involves a high level of collaboration between its law firms and other legal organizations and nonprofits in California specializing in areas such as education, benefits, mental health, and adoption. This collaboration helps ensure clients’ specific issues are being addressed. CLC finds interagency, interdisciplinary collaboration is even more important in smaller counties where resources and staff are limited.

Consistent communication. The key to the model’s success is strong and consistent communication to ensure all the players have the most comprehensive, current information about the child and family and have reached consensus about case strategy and the families’ service needs. In addition to internal team meetings, the CSEC specialty team also holds weekly interdisciplinary team meetings with other system partners including child welfare, county counsel, probation and service providers to share information and resolve disagreements on cases on the calendar for the following week. CLC finds it is critical to be upfront with clients when an advocate or partner agency is a mandated reporter.

Children’s Law Center, Washington, DC (CLC)

CLC uses an interdisciplinary approach that brings together attorneys, investigators, social workers, and special education attorneys to support its child-centered advocacy on behalf of children in abuse and neglect cases.

Team members. Every case has an assigned investigator who assists with client visits, background research, records requests, subpoenas, and other investigative and case assistant tasks. Social workers and special education attorneys are included on case teams as needed. Through regular and close supervision, attorneys identify opportunities to include other team members and work to spot issues for collaboration. Supervisor feedback on teaming, delegation, and use of investigators, special education attorneys and social workers is important to the success of this model.

Social worker roles. Each new case receives a check-in from a social worker who provides recommendations to the attorney. For cases involving complex clinical issues that could benefit from the ongoing involvement of a social worker, the attorney can refer the case for social work brief advice, social work consultation (ongoing advice and some case tasks, though often behind-the-scenes), or social work collaboration (the full integration of the CLC social worker into the representation). The social workers add value to the team in a variety of ways, but a few include identifying inappropriate services in boilerplate plans and completing biopsychosocial assessments of potential caregivers. CLC social workers are also helpful in litigation, as a countervailing clinical perspective to that of the agency can sometimes “level the playing field” in cases where the child’s attorney and agency are in opposition.

Special education attorney roles. Special education attorneys are also an important part of the interdisciplinary team. Like social workers, assigned special education attorneys may provide brief advice, consultation, or ongoing work (including direct representation of the child’s education decision maker where appropriate). Addressing educational issues is important for both the permanency and wellbeing of CLC’s child clients.

KidsVoice, Pennsylvania

KidsVoice is a nonprofit agency that provides interdisciplinary advocacy for children involved in the child welfare system in Allegheny County’s Juvenile Court.

Team members. Each child client is represented by a team that includes at least two co-equal partners:

an attorney and a Child Advocacy Specialist.¹⁸ Child Advocacy Specialists are social services professionals with a variety of expertise in areas such as social work, mental health, education, or child development.¹⁹ The wide diversity in the teams’ knowledge and experience is critical because child abuse and neglect cases typically have more than one issue that needs to be addressed. This also is important because KidsVoice represents clients until they turn 25, which means the teams help with school issues, housing, social security, criminal summary offenses, expungement, and much more.

Valuing different viewpoints. KidsVoice finds that valuing different points of view, especially about what should happen in a case, is what makes the team model both powerfully effective and challenging. Part of the challenge is that social services professionals are trained to help clients move forward at their own pace, while attorneys need to make recommendations and provide evidence on the court’s timeline. This creates an inherent but valuable tension that leads to recommendations and services tailored to each client’s unique needs. KidsVoice has not faced ethical issues with mandated reporting in its 19 years of interdisciplinary practice. It believes that with proper policies, those issues can be successfully addressed while honoring the professional ethics of everyone involved.

Managing success. Supervision and management are key to ensuring the interdisciplinary team model runs smoothly. KidsVoice provides initial and ongoing training, encourages strong communication between team members, and facilitates accountability through monthly supervisory meetings, quarterly file reviews, performance incentives, and year-end performance reviews.²⁰ KidsVoice emphasizes providing plenty of feedback and setting clear expectations but also trusting staff to handle these challenging cases.

Legal Aid Society’s Juvenile Rights Practice, New York (JRP)

JRP provides comprehensive legal representation to children involved in child welfare, juvenile delinquency, and Persons in Need of Supervision matters. JRP believes children are best served by an interdisciplinary practice model that ensures each child is receiving appropriate services in addition to zealous advocacy.

Intake team. JRP’s interdisciplinary approach begins with an intake team that includes attorneys, social workers, paralegals, and administrative data staff and supervisors. At intake, the social worker gathers information, speaks with caseworkers, and works with the attorneys to assess the case. After arraignment and assessment, the intake team meets informally to determine which cases require a social worker for the long term.

Social worker roles. Social workers play a vital role in cases by interfacing with agency social workers, advocating for clients, and keeping attorneys abreast of client needs. Because of the value social workers bring to teams, ideally a social worker would be a part of each team throughout the life of every case, but due to budgetary constraints, they only work on the more intensive cases past arraignment.

Addressing challenges. Some challenges JRP encounters with interdisciplinary practice include:

- *conflicting viewpoints* by team members on cases -- JRP attorneys share that conversation is key to overcoming this challenge and teams take the time to discuss their different experiences and opinions and form a unified position to present.
- *high caseloads* of the social workers can create challenges because a social worker may have many cases all requiring the highest priority.
- *confidentiality* is not a challenge because, under JRP policy, social workers are part of the legal team so they are covered by attorney-client privilege. Rather than create confidentiality conflicts, social workers are key to assessing risks of harm to clients and helping create safety plans.

Support Center for Child Advocates, Pennsylvania (Support Center)

The Support Center is the nation’s oldest and largest volunteer lawyer program dedicated exclusively to representing children who have experienced abuse and neglect.

Team approach. Since its founding in 1977, the program has teamed volunteer attorneys with masters-level staff child advocate social workers to represent individual children and sibling groups. The teams are

supported by staff attorneys who provide ongoing case consultation, technical assistance, and occasional court coverage. This interdisciplinary collaboration assures the child receives comprehensive, zealous advocacy, using all resources available through the court systems and public services. In addition to direct legal advocacy, the lawyer-social worker teams offer positive, consistent, and trusting relationships that are essential to help a client heal.

Case handling. Caseload caps are an essential instrument of quality control. The typical volunteer attorney represents one child or a sibling group. A full-time child advocate social worker serves 50 children. Twenty child advocate social workers and 10 staff attorneys work with more than 340 volunteer attorneys each year to represent 1,100+ children and youth. In a nationally recognized initiative, the Support Center is also working with Child Advocacy Practice Groups in 26 major Philadelphia law firms and corporate legal departments, as a source of collegial support and additional training for volunteers.

“Whole child” representation. The Support Center provides “whole child” representation, addressing issues of safety, permanency, and well-being, so clients can recover, heal, and succeed. The Support Center advocates for a child’s collateral issues and services, including education and health care. Team members work closely and collaboratively, conducting most activities together including home visits, collecting information from service providers and caregivers, attending interdisciplinary service plan meetings and court appearances to best represent and advocate for clients’ needs.

Interdisciplinary Parent Representation Models Washington State Office of Public Defense, Parents Representation Program (PRP)

The Washington State Office of Public Defense contracts with attorneys to represent indigent parents in child welfare proceedings as part of its Parents Representation Program (PRP).

Partnering with independent social workers. The program approaches interdisciplinary practice by contracting with independent social workers that can be part of the family defense team at the attorney’s discretion. There is currently about one full-time social worker for every three full-time attorneys in the program. Additionally, some individuals with social

worker contracts with the PRP are parents who were formerly involved in the child welfare system and can bring that perspective to the defense team's support of a parent client.

Social workers act as “language” translators, advocates, and supports for parents in the complex legal process and are essential to addressing certain aspects of cases that attorneys lack the special skills and knowledge to resolve. PRP finds that when attorneys and social workers communicate well and work separately but cooperatively on the legal and nonlegal issues that stand in the way of reunification or permanency, the interdisciplinary approach functions well.

Confidentiality. Under the Washington Courts Rules of Professional Conduct, the program social workers are considered nonlawyer assistants, or agents of the attorneys. Thus, social workers must balance their confidentiality duties with their mandated reporter status under Washington State law. However, PRP finds that mandated reporting is rarely an issue. Typically, if abuse did occur, it was before the initial removal and if the parent is not doing well, the child is not in the parent's care. Further, the parent will typically be counseled to not request return of a child if the parent is not ready because of safety concerns and risk that if the child is removed again, the agency is likely to attempt to quickly terminate parental rights.

Independent experts. PRP also provides funding for and encourages using independent experts to support the parent defense team. Experts are used to provide first or second opinion evaluations; home studies of parent clients, relatives or fictive kin; depositions; opinions in complex medical cases; and social worker forensic reviews to evaluate the state child welfare agency's compliance with state policy or practice.

Team approach benefits. PRP emphasizes, when implementing an interdisciplinary approach, communicating to attorneys that their representation is by no means deficient but that parents in these cases are better supported by a team of allies. In fact, when PRP provides technical assistance on stuck cases, often using a social worker or expert is identified as an avenue to help resolve the case. PRP also emphasizes good hiring practices, particularly focusing on contracting with social workers and attorneys who are skilled and passionate about social justice and have

strong emotional intelligence.

■ Parents for Parents Programs

The Washington State Office of Public Defense also funds an outside agency to manage, train, and coordinate county-level Parents for Parents programs. This program connects parents who have successfully navigated the child welfare system (“parent allies”) to parents who have recently become involved in a child welfare case. While not part of the defense team, this program often works with the defense team and supports parents experiencing the child welfare system.

New Mexico Family Advocacy Program (NMFAP)

NMFAP provides representation to parents in child welfare cases using an interdisciplinary team of lawyers, social workers, and parent mentors. The program began as a pilot project in one judicial district in 2013 after a visit to observe the Center for Family Representation (CFR) interdisciplinary model in New York. Initially, the social workers and parent mentors were funded in a piecemeal way using Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) general funds and some Court Improvement Program funding. After applying for a federal grant targeted for child welfare agencies, NMFAP was awarded a \$7.7 million grant in 2018 to fully staff the existing program and expand into two more judicial districts.

Social worker/parent mentor roles. Social workers play an important role on the team by helping parents engage in the child welfare legal process and services. Social workers provide clinical case management, attend agency meetings with parents, advocate for parents, help with concurrent planning, and recommend resources and supports to parents. At NMFAP, social workers are considered a part of the legal team, so they cannot be called to testify. Despite being on legal teams, the social workers are still mandated reporters and make sure to communicate this to the parent clients immediately. Social workers have had to report a few times in the six years NMFAP has worked with parents but no major problems have occurred. In addition, NMFAP has recently hired a group of parent mentors and is currently integrating them into their interdisciplinary team practice.

Expanding the interdisciplinary approach. NMFAP and its interdisciplinary approach is an important step forward in improving legal representation for parents in certain judicial districts of New Mexico. A task force created by the legislature is currently meeting to recommend best practices and potential structures to best support families and attorneys in the child welfare system across the state. This work has the potential to expand the interdisciplinary representation model throughout New Mexico.

New York City Interdisciplinary Parent Representation Models²¹

Bronx Defenders, Family Defense Practice (FDP)

FDP takes a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to family defense. Their holistic defense model is based on the understanding that there is rarely only one thing going on with a client and there are usually multiple consequences of a family's interaction with the legal system. This requires an interdisciplinary response to address each interlocking issue, including what brought the family to the attention of the child welfare system and what barriers exist to meeting case goals.

Social worker collaboration. At FDP, social workers and parent advocates work alongside lawyers to support families in child protection proceedings. Advocates and social workers help gain parents' trust, which encourages them to confide the actual issues that need to be addressed in the family. Advocates and social workers also play an important role in advocating for clients at agency conferences and meetings, keeping attorneys updated on changes in the case, and helping cases move forward. Finally, advocates and social workers go above and beyond the reasonable efforts requirements that child welfare agency caseworkers must meet to ensure the parents have a workable case plan and resources to fulfill the goals.

Civil legal advocate collaboration. In addition to working with social workers and advocates, FDP lawyers also collaborate with civil legal advocates, who can help parents apply for food stamps, housing, and other benefits, as well as other lawyers with expertise in areas such as housing, criminal justice, and immigration to help serve their clients.

Addressing challenges. When Bronx Defenders first began FDP, a challenge was getting the child welfare agency to accept and collaborate with their representation team, which took time, perseverance, and relationship building. Another challenge was obtaining funding because many jurisdictions did not fully understand the benefits of an interdisciplinary parent representation model. In addition to protecting families' rights, FDP finds the model saves money, resources, and time because when more work with the parents is completed between court dates, less litigation is needed.

Brooklyn Defender Services, Family Defense Practice (BDS-FDP)

BDS-FDP represents low-income parents in child welfare cases in the Brooklyn Family Court. BDS-FDP takes an interdisciplinary approach to protect clients' right to family integrity by teaming attorneys with social workers, paralegals, and administrative staff. Combining different disciplines allows the team to advance clients' cases in court while providing clients benefits and services to keep families together or help them safely reunify. BDS-FDP also collaborates with teams in BDS's other legal practices, such as criminal, immigration, or housing, to their clients benefit.

Center for Family Representation (CFR)

CFR provides legal assistance and social work services to families in crisis, with the goal of preventing children from entering foster care or minimizing time spent in foster care. CFR uses family defense teams, which include an attorney, social worker, and parent advocate. The team works to improve outcomes for families through in-court litigation, out-of-court social work referrals and case management, individualized service planning, and parent mentoring. The teams practice a shared ownership/authorship model of interdisciplinary practice, which means every team member is equally responsible for decision making throughout the case.²² Attorneys and social workers are trained together, share offices and files, and attend intake meetings.²³ Internal data collected by CFR indicates the model is helping families stay together: in 2018, over 54 percent of the children of CFR's parent clients did not enter foster care and the children who did had significantly shorter foster care stays compared to city and state medians.²⁴

Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, Family Defense Practice (NDS)

NDS represents parents from Northern Manhattan in abuse and neglect proceedings using a community-based, interdisciplinary, client-centered model.

Team approach. NDS's interdisciplinary approach involves a variety of professionals working together to meet the clients' needs, both on the family court case and on related legal issues such as criminal, immigration, and civil legal service needs.

Case assignments. In the Family Defense Practice, every case is assigned to either a parent advocate or social worker, in addition to an attorney. Because of their clinical training, social workers are usually assigned clients with severe mental illness, prolonged drug use, or multiple issues. The social workers and parent advocates allow the practice to dive deeper and provide support to parents, whether it's helping them set up or get to appointments or advocating for them outside of court at conferences. Additionally, depending on client needs, an investigator or case advocate might also be assigned to assist with the case.

Meeting clients' needs. Because clients often have more than one legal issue that needs to be addressed, NDS works with the client to identify priority issues

then determines how best to meet the client's needs with staff in the office. In practice this can look like the family defense attorney working in family court, while an immigration attorney, defense attorney, or other attorney works on the client's behalf on other cases.

Communication. Because of the fast pace of these cases, NDS emphasizes the importance of putting systems in place to ensure communication is taking place, so every team member has current case information and is on the same page regarding strategy and the client's priorities.

Additional Interdisciplinary Models

- [Colorado Office of the Child's Representative](#)
- [Colorado Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel](#)
- [Committee for Public Counsel Services \(Massachusetts\)](#)
- [Dependency Advocacy Center \(California\)](#)
- [https://eastbayfamilydefenders.org/ \(California\)](https://eastbayfamilydefenders.org/)
- [Orleans Public Defenders \(Louisiana\)](#)

Endnotes

1. The terms "interdisciplinary" and "multidisciplinary" can be used interchangeably to denote a team involving an attorney, social worker, and other experts or professionals. This document uses "interdisciplinary" to describe this model of representation.
2. For more information about drawing down Title IV-E federal funds to support high-quality legal representation for parents and children, please visit the Family Justice Initiative website [Federal Funding](#) page.
3. Federal law requires all state courts to provide meaningful language access, including interpretation services, to Limited English Proficient (LEP) litigants. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); *see also* U.S. Dep't of Justice, Civil Rights Div., Fed. Coordination and Compliance Section, *Language Access in State Courts* (2016), <https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/892036/download>. Attorneys should also have access to interpreters outside of court.
4. Martin Guggenheim & Susan Jacobs, *Providing Parents Multidisciplinary Legal Representation Significantly Reduces Children's Time in Foster Care*, CHILD LAW PRACTICE TODAY (June 4, 2019), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practiceonline/january---december-2019/providing-parents-multidisciplinary-legal-representation-signifi/.
5. Chris Gottlieb, Martin Guggenheim, & Madeleine Kurtz, *Discovering Family Defense: A History of the Family Defense Clinic at New York University School of Law*, 41 N.Y.U. REV. L. & SOCIAL CHANGE 539, 547 (2017).
6. *Id.* at 545, 547-48.
7. *Id.* at 551.
8. *Id.* at 556-57.
9. Lucas Gerber et al., *Effects of an Interdisciplinary Approach to Parental Representation in Child Welfare*, 102 CHILD. & YOUTH SERVS. REV. 42, 52 (2019).
10. Robbin Pott, *The Flint MDT Study: A Description and Evaluation of a Multidisciplinary Team Representing Children in Child Welfare*, in CHILDREN'S JUSTICE: HOW TO IMPROVE LEGAL REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM 189, 203-04

(Donald N. Duquette ed., 2016).

11. Notably, social workers must be licensed in each state and must generally abide by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. See NASW Code of Ethics, <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>.

12. For further analysis of these issues, see, e.g., Alexis Anderson, Lynn Barenberg & Paul R. Tremblay, *Professional Ethics in Interdisciplinary Collaboratives: Zeal, Paternalism, and Mandated Reporting*, 13 CLINICAL L. REV. 659, 690-91 (2007); Gerard F. Glynn, *Multidisciplinary Representation of Children: Conflicts Over Disclosures of Client Communications*, 27 J. MARSHALL L. REV. 617, 641 (1994); Jacqueline St. Joan, *Building Bridges, Building Walls: Collaboration Between Lawyers and Social Workers in a Domestic Violence Clinic and Issues of Client Confidentiality*, 7 CLINICAL L. REV. 403, 437-40 (2001).

13. D.C. Code § 4-1321.02(b) (“[Mandatory Reporters] are not required to report when employed by a lawyer who is providing representation in a criminal, civil, including family law, or delinquency matter and the basis for the suspicion arises solely in the course of that representation.”) This language was enacted in 2008 at the recommendation of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. See Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation Record Act of 2007, D.C. Law 17-198, Comm. Rpt. at 6-7.

14. La. Child. Code Ann. Art. 603(17)(b).

15. See Anderson, *supra* note 11, at 700.

16. Scott Hollander & Jonathan Budd, *KidsVoice: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Child Advocacy*, 41 U. MICH. J. L. REFORM 189, 195 (2007).

17. *Id.*; Interview with Michele Cortese and Izzy Baez of Center for Family Representation, ABA Center on Children and the Law and Family Justice Initiative Podcast on Interdisciplinary Legal Representation for Families (forthcoming 2019)[hereinafter *Interview with CFR*].

18. Hollander & Budd, *supra* note 15 at 192.

19. *Id.*

20. Hollander & Budd, *supra* note 15 at 194-95.

21. Each of the interdisciplinary representation models described in this section were studied as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of an interdisciplinary legal representation approach on child welfare outcomes. Gerber et. al., *supra* note 8.

22. *Interview with CFR*, *supra* note 16.

23. *Id.*

24. Center for Family Representation, *Our Results: Highlights from 15 Years of Accomplishments* (Nov. 2018), <https://www.cfrny.org/about-us/our-results/>.



The FJI unites professionals from around the country to ensure every child and every parent has high-quality legal representation when child welfare courts make life-changing decisions about their families. Through the FJI's work, child welfare lawyers, researchers, judges, social workers, policymakers, families impacted by abuse and neglect, and others are reenvisioning how to best protect children, strengthen families and support communities.