Since 1937, the NCJFCJ has been dedicated to turning these dreams into reality for children and families.
The Organization

Founded by judges in 1937, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges pursues a mission to improve courts and systems practice and raise awareness of the core issues that touch the lives of many of our nation’s children and families. A leader in continuing education opportunities, research, publication development, technical assistance, and policy development in the field of juvenile and family justice, the NCJFCJ is unique in providing practice-based resources to jurisdictions and communities nationwide. The NCJFCJ seeks to improve the standards, practices, and effectiveness of the nation’s juvenile and family courts while acknowledging and upholding victims’ rights, the safety of all family members, and the safety of the community.

The NCJFCJ’s membership is made up of more than 2,000 judges, commissioners, masters, and other juvenile and family law professionals from around the country and the world; however, its reach extends far beyond the membership. Through the availability of training and technical assistance for judges and other professionals working in the field, the NCJFCJ continues to play a key role in improving the practice of juvenile and family justice.

The NCJFCJ has been part of the University of Nevada, Reno community since 1969. A non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation, the NCJFCJ relies on funding from federal and state grants, private foundations, and generous members and donors. The organization’s four program departments support and extend its mission. The Family Violence, Permanency Planning for Children, and Juvenile and Family Law departments have numerous ongoing projects exploring and implementing evidence-based practices and effective strategies for judges on issues including domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, minority issues, child support, and other timely issues. NCJFCJ’s research division, the National Center for Juvenile Justice, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, focuses on providing the field with the latest research on the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Each year, the NCJFCJ provides valuable services including cutting-edge training, in-depth technical assistance, and wide-ranging publications to as many as 30,000 judges and juvenile justice, child welfare, and family law professionals. In addition, the NCJFCJ and the University of Nevada, Reno work together to provide the nation’s only advanced degree program in judicial studies.

Our juvenile and family courts deal daily with the most difficult and challenging family issues. For more than 70 years, the NCJFCJ has been committed to helping our nation’s judges and others working in the field meet these challenges, develop solutions, and achieve the best possible outcomes for our nation’s children and families.

The Issues

Fact: As of September 30, 2008, approximately 463,000 children were in foster care in the United States.1

Every day, judges face difficult decisions affecting the more than 460,000 abused and neglected children in foster care in the United States. The NCJFCJ plays an essential role in assisting judges who oversee the safety, permanency, and well-being of children appearing before them. Through policy development, training, technical assistance, and research projects, improved court practice is achieved, and the complex issues affecting these children and families are addressed. Among NCJFCJ’s many ongoing initiatives are the Child Victims Act Model Courts Project—a network of Model Courts that serve as models and mentors to jurisdictions nationwide—as well as the Courts Catalyzing Change Initiative, the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute, and the Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues.
**Fact:** More than 31 million youth were under juvenile court jurisdiction in 2005. Of these, 80% were between the ages of 10 and 15.²

Research tells us not only why children become delinquent, but also what programs are most likely to work for them. The NCJFCJ offers judges and court professionals valuable training, technical assistance, and publications to help them address a variety of delinquency issues. Since the 2005 publication of Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases, the volume’s 16 Key Principles have formed the basis of the Delinquency Model Courts Initiative which focuses on improving court process and case outcomes for delinquent youth and their families. NCJFCJ’s focus on juvenile substance use and abuse enables judges and other professionals to receive the latest information on the issue, as well as assistance to jurisdictions planning, implementing, or enhancing juvenile drug courts through the OJP Juvenile Drug Court Training and Technical Assistance Project.

**Fact:** Each year, an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner. Among households with a female victim of intimate partner violence, 38% had children under age 12 living at home.³

Domestic violence puts millions of women and their families at risk each year and is one of the single greatest social ills impacting the nation. The NCJFCJ has advanced social change in courts and communities across the country by providing cutting-edge training, technical assistance, and policy development on issues of family violence. Through such projects as the federal Greenbook Initiative, National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence, Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody, and Full Faith and Credit Project, the NCJFCJ has enhanced the safety, well-being, and stability of domestic violence victims and their children by improving the way criminal, civil, and social justice systems respond to family violence.

**Fact:** During fiscal year 2008, 1.8 million paternities were established and acknowledged; and 1.2 million child support orders were established.⁴

With nearly half of marriages ending in divorce, and the legal and social definition of family undergoing transition, courts are being called upon more than ever to intervene in human relationships. In order to reduce detrimental effects on children, it is vital that judges and other professionals be informed about the latest developments in the field. Through past conferences including the Forum on Children and Families in Court and the Custody and Visitation Symposium, and publications focusing on the many aspects of child support, the NCJFCJ provides valuable training and technical assistance on the latest psychological, scientific, legal, and technological information affecting children, including custody, visitation, paternity, and child support, among other related topics.

Research is a vital component of the NCJFCJ’s efforts to improve the lives of children and families. NCJFCJ’s Juvenile and Family Law, Permanency Planning for Children, and National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) departments conduct empirical research and program evaluations to improve the effectiveness and fairness of juvenile justice and dependency system processing and to improve the outcomes of its many prevention and intervention programs. Founded in 1973, the NCJJ’s efforts also describe the nature, extent, and trends in juvenile crime and victimization in the United States, which is made available through the annual Juvenile Court Statistics report and the Statistical Briefing Book, a unique Web-based tool that allows users to create custom crime statistics reports for local communities (http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/dat.html).

---

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2003); Bureau of Justice Statistics (2009).
Vision & Mission

The **vision** of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges is for a society in which every family and child has access to fair, equal, effective, and timely justice.

The **mission** of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges is to provide all judges, courts, and related agencies involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of the families and children who seek justice.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

P.O. Box 8970
Reno, NV 89507
Phone: 775-784-6012
Fax: 775-784-6628
E-mail: staff@ncjfcj.org
Web site: www.ncjfcj.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ncjfcj
Twitter: www.twitter.com/ncjfcj
Linkedin: http://linkedin.ncjfcj.org