

FREDRIC G. LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW

UF LAW

Center on Children and Families



UF UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



Center on Children and Families

The mission of the Levin College of Law Center on Children and Families is to promote the highest quality advocacy, teaching and scholarship in family and children's law and policy. Center faculty are national and international leaders and work with students to collaborate with organizations at all levels — such as the Florida judiciary, bi-partisan congressional roundtables, American Bar Association and International Society of Family Law — on law reform and issues related to children and their families. In addition to coordinating the Family Law Certificate Program, the center holds conferences, sponsors lectures, funds student research and projects, generates publication of books and articles, and educates young people on their rights and responsibilities in a free society.

Founded in 1909, the Levin College of Law is one of the nation's top public law schools, with a highly comprehensive, diverse curriculum. It is accredited by the American Bar Association and a member of the Association of American Law Schools. Student and faculty research is supported by one of the nation's lead-

ing law libraries, the Legal Information Center, which offers extensive research and electronic resources. New construction completed in 2005 doubled the library's size, and added state-of-the-art classrooms to the law campus.

The Center on Children and Families is a distinctive part of a preeminent land grant university. Founded in 1853, the University of Florida is one of only 30 public universities in the prestigious Association of American Universities, which recognizes outstanding North American graduate research universities, and offers professional degrees in law, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and veterinary medicine. UF has a public mission of teaching, research and service, and has identified children and families as a top priority. The university's curricular strength in numerous fields relevant to family law is a distinct advantage. Thanks to cross-registration available to UF law students, students may enroll for credit in courses offered by other UF colleges. Law school classes often feature guest presentations by university experts, and faculty and students can team with UF specialists

in health sciences, education, sociology, psychology, economics and social services on cutting-edge research and in cross-disciplinary training. UF law students also can choose to earn a joint degree, enabling them in as few as four years to earn their law degree along with a master's degree in medical sciences, counselor education or more than 30 other choices.

Contact Information

www.law.ufl.edu/centers/childlaw/

Program Assistant Debbie Willis,
kelly@law.ufl.edu

Levin College of Law
P.O. Box 117625
Gainesville, FL 32611-7625

Phone: 352-273-0613
Fax: 352-392-2606

Admissions

www.law.ufl.edu/admissions/

Produced by the Levin College of Law
Communications Office

Family Law Certificate

The Family Law Certificate provides a credential valued by prosecutors' offices, government agencies, and public interest organizations, as well as private firms of every size and in every location.

With the increasing complexity of divorce and children's law and rise of the nontraditional family, family law is one of the fastest growing and most complex practice specialties. Judges and practitioners have expressed a need for better training of family advocates in areas such as child development and economics of the family, negotiation and drafting, and courtroom advocacy for families and children. Under mandate from the Florida Supreme Court, Florida recently created a Unified Family Court to handle all family, juvenile and delinquency matters. This created a new demand for well-rounded and well-trained family specialists.

The certificate was established to meet the needs of students eager for guidance in pursuing a coherent course of study to help make them more sophisticated and competitive in the market for new lawyers. The program and curriculum are regularly reviewed to incorporate cutting edge developments in family law through consultation with a distinguished advisory board. The certificate coordinates clinical and traditional classroom offerings and allows for more efficiency through sequential learning, with one course building on another. It is administered by the Center on Children and Families. Enrolled students must take eight (8) credit hours above their J.D. requirements to graduate.

Certificate Requirements

- ♦ Apply and be accepted for admission to the certificate program. Students are encouraged to apply as early as possible in their law school career.
- ♦ Meet all College of Law graduation requirements.
- ♦ Complete eight credit hours in addition to the minimum required for the J.D. (96 total for most students).
- ♦ Meet with program coordinator prior to registration each semester.
- ♦ Earn 20 credits in the Family Law Curriculum, which may include approved graduate courses in other departments.
- ♦ Students are required to complete an advanced writing requirement of a paper in the area of family law in an approved seminar.
- ♦ Achieve an average equivalent of 3.0 in 15 of 20 credits earned in courses designated. Courses previously completed by students subsequently admitted into the program will be credited toward satisfaction of concentration requirements.



“We are focused on engaging the larger community of academics and activists interested in issues involving children and families and are focused on facilitating a productive interaction between worlds that are too often disconnected: academia and the worlds of policy and practice. Our most important contribution in this endeavor is to train generations of students to contribute to legal reform and social change in a way that focuses on protecting children’s rights and in a way that recognizes the reality of children’s lives.”

— Assistant Professor Shani King



Family Law Curriculum

Students may focus on family law through the following courses, or opt to complete a formal certification in this area through the Family Law Certificate. For detailed course descriptions and list of faculty visit www.law.ufl.edu/ccf.

Core Courses

Students must successfully complete each group of core courses to qualify for the Family Law Certificate.

CORE I

Required Fundamental Courses

Students must successfully complete:

- ♦ Perspectives on Family Law (4 credits)
- ♦ Child Parent & State or Economics of the Family (3 credits)

CORE II

Required Advanced Courses

Students must successfully complete at least two of the following:

- ♦ Adoption (2 credits)
- ♦ Child Support (2 credits)
- ♦ Collaborative Lawyering (2 credits)
- ♦ Juvenile Justice (2 credits)
- ♦ Psychology and Family Law (2 credits)

- ♦ Comparative Family Law (3 credits)
- ♦ International Children's Rights (3 credits)
- ♦ Family Policy (3 credits)
- ♦ Florida Family Court (2 credits)

CORE III

Required Skills Course

Students must successfully complete:

- ♦ One Clinic or Externship (4 to 9 credits) (eligible clinics include Gator TeamChild, Child Welfare Clinic, Pro Se Clinic, Mediation Clinic and Full Rep Family Law Clinic, and eligible externships include Eighth Circuit Family Court and other appropriate externships approved by the director)

Plus one of the following:

- ♦ Perspectives on the Family Lab (2 credits)
- ♦ Mediation (2-3 credits)
- ♦ Interviewing and Counseling (2 to 3 credits)
- ♦ Negotiation (2 to 3 credits)

CORE IV

Critical Perspectives Requirement

Students must successfully complete one of the following:

- ♦ Gender and the Law (2-3 credits)
- ♦ Poverty Law (3 credits)
- ♦ Race and Race Relations Law (2-3 credits)
- ♦ Law of Sex and Sexuality (2-3 credits)

Elective Courses

In addition to the courses listed above, the following electives may be used to complete the required 20 credits or, in appropriate cases, substituted for a comparable required course with the director's approval:

- ♦ Disability Law
- ♦ Education Law
- ♦ Elder Law
- ♦ Human Rights Law
- ♦ Federal Courts
- ♦ Estate Planning
- ♦ Health Law
- ♦ Any multidisciplinary course deemed by the director to be appropriate based on students over all record and goals, including appropriate graduate level courses 5000 and above in other departments or colleges.

Opportunities for Students

ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTER ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
ENGAGE STUDENTS IN LEARNING AND ADVOCACY

The Center on Children and Families engages in a broad range of activities on behalf of children and families. While some projects are ongoing, others develop during the course of each academic year based on the interests and expertise of our associated faculty. Students are integral to these projects and this provides a range of opportunities to experience and contribute to children and families.

Conferences

The center regularly sponsors conferences that bring national and international scholars and practitioners together to exchange ideas and develop strategies to aid children and families. Conferences have focused on a children's agenda for change; children, culture and violence; developing a multidisciplinary curriculum to train effective advocates; and race, children and education (on the anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education).

The center also has supported ongoing training of practitioners, such as a collaborative law course attended by practitioners and students to intensively study and become certified in this cutting edge approach to the handling of family law matters.

Walter Weyrauch Lecture and Other Lectures

During the 2006-2007 academic year the center inaugurated the Walter Weyrauch Distinguished Lecture in Family Law in honor of our colleague Walter Weyrauch, emeritus professor of law. Professor Weyrauch is a beloved teacher and prolific scholar, most recently publishing a book on gypsy law. This lecture brings leading scholars to the center to deliver a lecture on a family law issue. The lectures have focused on topics such as children, race and adoption, and marriage.

In addition to the Weyrauch lecture, the center brings other scholars to the University of Florida to enrich the learning of students in the program and the law school community. In the past, the center has hosted lecturers on collaborative law, fathers rights, and the relationship between the state and communities of color.

Amicus Briefs

The center is regularly asked to participate in litigation involving groundbreaking issues in family law, and when the center can serve to provide a child-centered, research focused brief to assist courts it may assist in the writing or join with other advocates to ensure that a research-based perspective is heard. Briefs typically involve one or more faculty and the active participation of students. The center has been a part of advocacy before state courts in Florida and other states, federal courts, and several times before the United States Supreme Court.

Youth and Community Outreach

Advocacy for children also involves the center in activities that benefit the local community. The center has provided programming to local and middle high schools on various issues of interest to youth, including Internet safety and juvenile justice. The center is engaged in developing online resources for teens to access information and engage in dialogue about the issues that affect them. The center has been particularly concerned with the juvenile justice system, including developing a publication to assist families and youth to access services to prevent or resolve encounters with the juvenile justice system. In addition, the center has fostered an unshackling project to gather data to determine whether courts need to use shackles on all or some juvenile offenders, and the best practices in this area. All of these activities are ones in which students are heavily engaged, and serve the mission of contributing to the community.

Research Opportunities

The center and its associated faculty frequently engage in research related to issues important to children and families, which provides students serving as research fellows with an opportunity to further enhance their expertise. The faculty are prolific scholars who actively are involved in a broad range of projects.

continued on page 6



continued from page 5

Pro Bono Work

In conjunction with Career Services, the center sponsors a project to inform students about pro bono opportunities in family law as well as other areas of law. Many students train to become a guardian ad litem, where they serve the interests of a child in dependency or divorce proceedings. The center strongly encourages students to engage in pro bono work.

Family Law Society

Students have organized a Family Law Society that gives students with an interest in family law an opportunity to meet and develop their interest. The society organizes a range of activities, including speakers and community outreach.

Clinical Programs

The Levin College of Law provides numerous opportunities for students to learn by doing through practical experience, simulation-based courses, and volunteer or paid clerkships. The law school's special family law curriculum includes unique and innovative programs that allow students to gain important on-the-job experience prior to graduation.

The Virgil Hawkins Civil Clinics and Center on Children and Families offer five different family and children's law clinics and externship areas of opportunity where students may represent real clients under supervision of experienced faculty.

- ♦ THE CHILD WELFARE CLINIC was designed in partnership with the UF Department of Pediatrics and provides students with valuable training and experience in child abuse and neglect, child custody, delinquency, domestic violence and health care cases. Students are assigned to a field placement with the Child Protection Team, the Juvenile Public Defender, Child Welfare Legal Services or the Guardian Ad Litem Legal Office. Concurrent with these placements, all students in the clinic also attend an intensive seminar with the clinic director emphasizing teamwork, collaboration with other disciplines and governmental agencies. Students become trained legal interns, certified by the Florida Supreme Court.
- ♦ THE FAMILY LAW FULL REPRESENTATION CLINIC provides full service legal representation to indigent clients in family law cases. Student lawyers, who serve as first chair counsel, have the opportunity to perform interviews, provide legal counseling, draft pleadings, motions, orders, judgements and other legal documents, conduct discovery, and represent clients in negotiations, mediations and in court. (Actual legal work varies depending on timing and complexity of assigned cases.) All student lawyers undergo intensive training before receiving their cases, and continue to receive skills training and supervision throughout their clinical experience.
- ♦ THE FAMILY LAW PRO SE/UNBUNDLING CLINIC increases access to the courts for low income families by utilizing many innovative procedures, rules and forms approved by the Florida Supreme Court, including rules on "unbundled" legal services. Students work with clients on an individualized basis

to determine what services they will provide, ranging from legal advice to full legal representation. Family therapists train students in therapeutic approaches to resolving family conflict.

- ♦ THE MEDIATION CLINIC provides an opportunity for students to become Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediators. After completing an intensive seminar, students meet mentorship requirements by observing and co-mediating at the Alachua County Courthouse.
- ♦ THE GATOR TEAMCHILD JUVENILE ADVOCACY CLINIC provides free legal services to indigent children—infants to teenagers—in a wide variety of cases. By representing actual clients with real problems, students sharpen their understanding of ethical issues and learn and practice fundamental advocacy skills, including interviewing, counseling and negotiation. Gator TeamChild is based on a national youth advocacy model that is interdisciplinary and proactive. Children are referred for Gator TeamChild services by courts, guardians ad litem, school personnel, public defenders and prosecutors, state agency case workers, and/or other agencies. In this interdisciplinary clinic students are trained to become certified legal interns and then work in teams to determine the needs of each child client, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the child and family, and advocate for the provision of services. Students collaborate with caseworkers, psychiatrists, education personnel and others. Clinic interns are supervised by faculty who are licensed attorneys. In Gator TeamChild, students represent real clients in the areas of delinquency, dependency, school-related issues and Social Security disability.

Externships

Externships provide students with another opportunity to train in real world settings with children and families. Selected students work with state, federal or local government agencies or public interest groups, in local or long distance placements. Placements are designed to ensure students a variety of work experiences in child and family law. Students may gain experience working as externs in family courts, government agencies and public interest or legal services offices.

Local externships include:

- ♦ Eighth Judicial Circuit Family Court
- ♦ Three Rivers Legal Services
- ♦ Child Welfare Legal Services
- ♦ Alachua County State's Attorney
- ♦ Peaceful Paths

Long-distance externships have included:

- ♦ Australia children's rights
- ♦ Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
- ♦ Florida Supreme Court, Tallahassee, Fla.



“There is no greater reward than knowing you have made a difference in the life of a child. As a family lawyer, you have the tools to make good things happen.”
- Founding Director Barbara Bennett Woodhouse, Center on Children and Families

Alumni Whitney Untiedt developed passion for family law at UF

My involvement with the Center on Children and Families during my time at UF Law was vital in preparing me for “the real world” after graduation. The faculty affiliated with the center understand that law students need both the academic and the clinical training to be able to apply the law, work effectively with clients, and advocate successfully in court. Family law

brings attorneys in constant contact with people navigating very difficult — often heart wrenching — times, and the courses I took for my family law certificate helped me develop the skills I needed to meet the personal and legal needs of fragile clients.

The CCF faculty has created a core academic program that gives law students the solid foundation they need to be successful as young family law attorneys. I was able to take advantage of the Virgil Hawkins Clinic and a legal aid externship during law school, in addition to traditional academic courses with UF Law’s well-respected family law faculty. As a Children’s Fellow, I helped coordinate academic

conferences, researched juvenile death penalty issues, and assisted with an amicus curiae brief to the United States Supreme Court — not bad for a 3L! Working alongside faculty members such as Barbara Woodhouse and Nancy Dowd at the Center on Children and Families allowed me the opportunity to fully explore my chosen career path before I even graduated law school, and helped me develop my practical skills beyond those of the typical student.

As an attorney with the Juvenile Division of the Public Defender’s Office in Gainesville, I deal with families in crisis every day — and every day brings a new challenge, a new issue, and a new triumph. For me, nothing is better than making a positive difference in a child’s life. I get to do that every day — and I love what I do.



Whitney Untiedt graduated cum laude from UF Law in 2005. Formerly an Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellow at Three Rivers Legal Services in Gainesville, Untiedt currently works as a Juvenile Public Defender, providing legal assistance to children charged with a crime. In addition to earning her Certificate in Family Law, Untiedt was a Children’s Research Fellow, a Florida Bar Foundation Public Service Fellow, president of the Trial Team, and participated in the Virgil Hawkins Full Representation Clinic. Currently, she is a member of the Center on Children and Families Advisory Board.

UF LAW:

- ♦ One of the **NATION'S LARGEST** law schools, with 1,300 students, approximately 60 tenure/tenure track faculty and 40-plus other full-time faculty who support the college through clinical, research, skills training and administrative programs. It offers J.D. certificate programs in Environmental and Land Use Law, Estates and Trusts Practice, Family Law, Intellectual Property Law, and International and Comparative Law; an extensive array of joint degree programs; specialized centers, institutes and program areas; and strong clinical offerings.
- ♦ A high quality, comprehensive law school, with **LEADING PROGRAMS IN GRADUATE TAXATION, ENVIRONMENTAL AND LAND USE LAW, AND FAMILY LAW.**
- ♦ Has offered **STRONG INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS** for more than three decades, and many faculty are experts in international legal issues. These programs and its LL.M. in Comparative Law Program for foreign lawyers expand the school's curriculum and international offerings and strengthen its ties with programs and scholars around the globe.
- ♦ Has a **LONG-STANDING TRADITION FOR PREPARING ITS GRADUATES FOR SIGNIFICANT LEADERSHIP ROLES.** Its alumni include four presidents of the American Bar Association, the majority of The Florida Bar presidents, 34 judges in U.S. federal courts, four governors of Florida, and hundreds of state senators and representatives and Florida Cabinet members. Ten graduates became college presidents, including at UF. A dozen have served as deans of law schools.



THE UF LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW CENTER ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 2008 RESEARCH FELLOWS:

Front from left: Patricia Antonucci, Lauren Marks, Kristianna Rodriguez.
Top from left: Emily Banks, Mandy Harrell, Stephanie Bates, Cody
Hunter Galloway. Not pictured: Andre Hammel.

UF LAW ONLINE Access the latest on UF Levin College of Law faculty, programs and events, a variety of legal links and more at www.law.ufl.edu

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA
Levin College of Law
P.O. Box 117625
Gainesville, FL 32611