

Continuing a 30-year Legacy of Child Advocacy

In 1976, Michigan Law School Professor Donald N. Duquette founded the Child Advocacy Law Clinic (CALC), the first legal clinic of its kind in the United States. Today, CALC is one of the nation's most respected and influential child advocacy law programs, and Michigan Law is regarded as a leader in child advocacy, family law, and interdisciplinary approaches to child welfare law and policy.

The Center for Family Advocacy was developed by Professor Duquette and Michigan Law School faculty member Vivek Sankaran, a clinical professor in the Child Advocacy Law Clinic. Professor Sankaran is directing the Center.

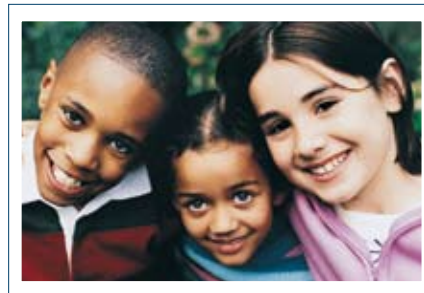
“*Unless a new model for the delivery of services is implemented, children will continue to enter and remain in foster care for preventable reasons, with tragic consequences. Building on its long and notable legacy of child advocacy and family law, the Michigan Law School—through the CFA—offers just such a model, one that holds out the promise of a better future for the children and families of Wayne County.*”

—Justice Bobbe J. Bridge, ret'd.
Founding President/CEO
Center for Children & Youth Justice

Creating a New Model of Foster Care for Wayne County

By providing comprehensive, coordinated legal and social work services to low-income families in Detroit, the Center for Family Advocacy (CFA) will:

- **Reduce the number of children in foster care** by strengthening families and supporting kinship care givers.
- **Prevent emotional trauma to youngsters** in peril of unnecessary or prolonged foster care placements.
- **Alleviate financial and staff burdens** on the state's child welfare system.
- **Allow the foster care system to focus its resources** on children in need of its protection.



Financial Support

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The Detroit Center for Family Advocacy

An Innovative Model to Reduce the Number of Children in Foster Care



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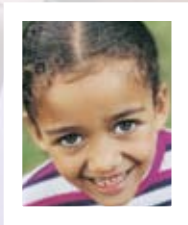
M **Michigan Law**
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

A Program of the
University of Michigan
Law School
Child Advocacy Clinic

A Tragic and Growing Problem

Generally, children at risk are best protected by empowering their families to protect and care for them. Unfortunately, services designed to prevent youngsters from entering foster care are largely unavailable causing children to unnecessarily enter the “system.” In Wayne County, approximately 1500 new child protective petitions are filed annually and, on any given day 7,000 children are in the temporary or permanent custody of the State. The foster care system is overwhelmed.

Despite the efforts of committed child welfare and community leaders, the prospects for children placed in foster care are troubling. Children in care routinely move from one home to another, receive inadequate medical and mental health treatment, endure severe emotional and physical trauma, and fall behind academically. Even worse, those who “age out” of the system are likely to end up in prison, unemployed, homeless, or dead.



Without innovative prevention programs that will reduce the need for children to enter or remain in foster care, these problems will persist for years to come.

An Innovative Solution

The Detroit Center for Family Advocacy (CFA):

- Empowers parents and extended family members to care for their own children
- Diverts children from public foster care and hastens the exit of others.

The CFA gives at-risk families in Detroit the legal tools necessary to protect their own children. CFA lawyers, with the assistance of a social worker and parent advocate, use legal mechanisms—such as guardianships, child custody or personal protection orders, or educational advocacy—to allow family members to protect and provide for children without the need for expensive and traumatic out-of-family placement.

The CFA also assists kinship and other caregivers to overcome legal obstacles to adoption or permanent guardianship—thus allowing children to exit government foster care.

By providing timely, coordinated support for parents and kinship caregivers the CFA is helping to stem the tide of unnecessary foster care placements. That in turn will enable the current system to address the needs of youngsters who desperately needs its protection and care.

In addition, this three-year pilot program is designed to:

- Provide pro bono opportunities for local law firms.
- Capture lessons from direct service and apply them to system reform.
- Offer a site for learning, practical application of knowledge, and community-based research for U-M students and faculty.
- Engage and sustain partnerships that will improve quality of life for the city of Detroit and its residents.

A Multidisciplinary Approach

With an emphasis on using private law remedies to keep children safe with their families, cases will be referred to the CFA primarily by the Michigan Department of Human Services. Once a case is accepted, a CFA attorney, social worker, and parent advocate will work closely with family members. Each individual on the CFA team will contribute a distinct set of skills.



The attorney will guide parents and caregivers through complex laws and procedures, providing zealous advocacy, timely legal assistance, and follow-up support.

The social worker will provide case management and help parents or caregivers access a network of social services.

The parent advocate, someone who has experienced the child welfare system firsthand, will offer support and advice on navigating the system.

Graduate-level professional students in social work and law will provide a variety of services.

A Unique Opportunity

The CFA offers team members a rare opportunity to shape a more positive future for hundreds of Michigan children. The success of the Center depends on the collaboration of legal and social work professionals and graduate student interns, working in tandem with peer mentors, non-profit agencies, and government departments. To extend its capacity to serve families, the CFA will partner with attorneys from Detroit law firms and local law schools to handle cases pro bono.

We invite you to join us in this important endeavor.

For more information about the **Detroit Center for Family Advocacy**—and opportunities to support its work—please visit the CFA website at

www.law.umich.edu/centersandprograms/ccl/cfa/

Or contact the Center
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