

THE DETROIT CENTER FOR FAMILY ADVOCACY

AN INITIATIVE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

[HTTP://WWW.LAW.UMICH.EDU/CENTERSANDPROGRAMS/CCL/CFA](http://www.law.umich.edu/centersandprograms/ccl/cfa)



Who are we

- Founded in July 2009
- Project of the University of Michigan Law School, Child Advocacy Law Clinic
- Funded by private/public partnership
- Based in Detroit – focus on the Osborn neighborhood
- Provide multidisciplinary legal, social work, parent advocacy to families to reduce the number of children in foster care
- Staff – 3 attorneys, social worker, parent advocate, legal assistant
- Two types of cases – prevention and permanency
- Close collaboration with the DHS
- Evaluation Component

Guiding Principles

Too many children enter care

Too many children stay in care

Treatment of children while in care is inadequate

Too many legal orphans

Prospects of children aging out of care are troubling

Any attempt to reform foster care must begin with reducing the number of children in foster care

Kids need families. Families need not be perfect.

What we do – Prevention Cases

Provide legal, social work and parent advocacy to parents to prevent the unnecessary entry of children into foster care.

Criteria

- CPS substantiates case as Category I, II or III

- Child(ren) residing with parent, guardian or custodian

- Legal services are expected to help parent, guardian or custodian provide a safe and stable home for the child

What we do – Permanency Cases

Provide legal and social work advocacy to families to remove barriers to permanency.

Criteria

- Child in foster care (typically MCI wards)
- Permanency goal not reunification
- Legal and social work assistance to caregiver will expedite permanency

Common Legal Barriers

Prevention

Landlord-Tenant
Domestic Violence
Special education
Custody/Guardianship/Power of Attorney
Interstate Placements

Permanency

Divorce
Lack of understanding of legal requirements/options for permanency
Expungements/Criminal History
Securing relevant documents
Licensing issues – lost paperwork, misapplication of regulations
Filing fees

Social Work Barriers

- **Housing**
- **Public Benefits**
- **Day Care**
- **Securing Move-In Expenses**
- **Appliances / Furniture**
- **Utilities “Shut-Off” / Account Openings**
- **Employment**
- **Medical Insurance**
- **Educational Needs**
- **Afterschool Programs**

Examples of our work



Where we get our cases from

Referral Sources (Non-Exhaustive)

DHS – MAIN SOURCE

Court
Private child-placing agencies
Self-referrals
Family Members/Friends
Mental Health Professionals
Community Agencies
Churches/Clergy

The Detroit Center for Family Advocacy (CFA)

- Summary/Early Results
- Questions
- Contact/Visit Us
 - 3031 W. Grand Blvd, Suite 440, Detroit, MI 48202
 - Osborn Satellite Office, 13560 East McNichols, 48205
 - 313-875-4233 (phone)
 - lawdetroitcfa@umich.edu
 - <http://www.law.umich.edu/centersandprograms/ccl/cfa>