



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

The Advocacy Institute Is Pleased to Present

What's KLG Got to Do With It? The 2021 Statutory Amendments and Appellate Trends Impacting DCF Practice

May 8, 2023

10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

WEBINAR

Program Summary

This program will cover recent appellate trends impacting the DCF Practice Group, with a focus on the Appellate Division's interpretation of the July 2021 Amendments to the KLG Act, Title 30 and Title 9, including DCP&P v. DCA, 474 N.J. Super. 11 (App. Div. 2022). The panelists will discuss common defense arguments and how the amendments impact presentation of evidence, client advice, resource parent preference, expert testimony, and best interest analysis. The presenters will also provide an overview of all published FN and FG case law from 2021-2022, with trial practice tips and practical guidance on filing and opposing interlocutory appeals.

Eligibility

This program is only open to Deputy and Assistant Attorneys General in the DCF practice group and DCF agency attorneys invited to attend.

Faculty

DAG Mary L. Harpster is a member of the Division of Law's Department of Children and Families Appeals Section, where she drafts appellate briefs and oppositions to petitions for certification, handles a heavy motion practice, and conducts oral advocacy. Her work includes three affirmative appeals challenging a trial court's interpretation of the July 2021 amendments to Title 9, Title 30, and the KLG Act, and the recently published decision in DCP&P v. D.C.A., 474 N.J. Super. 11 (App. Div. 2022). Prior to joining the DCF Appellate Section, DAG Harpster was a member of the DCF Essex Section, handling FN, FG, and FC cases for six local offices. Before practicing law, she worked in nonprofit theater management; most recently as the Deputy Director of the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York, an advocacy organization for New York City's

nonprofit theater companies, where she created and managed two loan funds, six re-grant funds, and two technical assistance programs for the Alliance's 350 member theaters. DAG Harpster holds a J.D. from NYU School of Law.

DAG Leah A. Schmidt is a member of the Division of Law's Department of Children and Families Appeals Section, where she researches and drafts briefs before the Appellate Division and N.J. Supreme Court and conducts oral advocacy in DCF matters including child abuse and neglect and termination of parental rights cases. She has represented the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP) in FN, FG and FC cases in multiple counties, provided training to local DCPP offices, tried hundreds of child protection cases and argued several appeals before New Jersey appellate courts. Prior to joining DOL, DAG Schmidt was an associate at the law office of Thaniel J. Beinert & Associates in Brooklyn, NY. Before practicing law, she was an Americorps NCCC associate in Colorado, New Mexico, Iowa, and Illinois, where she completed a variety of service projects designed to strengthen local communities. DAG Schmidt holds a J.D. from New York Law School.

CLE Credit

NJ CLE Credit: This program has been approved by the Board on Continuing Legal Education of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for 1.8 hours of Alternative Verifiable Learning Format (AVF) total CLE credit. Of these, 0.0 qualify as hours of credit for ethics/professionalism.

Registration

Those who are eligible to apply should use the Zoom Webinar registration link in the Program Announcement email. Students who are registered will receive a confirmation email with a link to access the program.

Students must download Zoom before the webinar in order for the AGAI to record polling responses that are required for attendance verification and CLE credit.

The AGAI will be unable to verify attendance or grant CLE credit to students who have not downloaded Zoom before the webinar.