



## Transformational Relationships for Youth Success



*By Rachel Davidson  
OCA Director*

Creating and nurturing relationships are at the heart of the helping professions. In 2017, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) in the U.S. and the Dartington Social Research Unit in the U.K. published a report based on their study of transformational relationships between young people and workers. They conducted this study because they previously encountered the importance of relationships for youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

This study identified challenges that youth encounter including the following: stress; difficulty of experiencing and recognizing emotions; negative self-perception and shame; and powerlessness and lack of agency. For workers who excel at transformational relationships, the study identified the following common attributes: optimism; emotional maturity; adaptability; flexibility, the willingness to keep learning and try different things; the ability to live with ambiguity; curiosity; passion; and empathy.

See [Transformation](#), Page 8

### Building Successful Partnerships

**Audrey Brannen, DFCS Region 5 Caregiver Recruitment and Retention (CRRU) Regional Administrator**, recently presented to her DFCS colleagues about the efforts the team in DFCS Region 5 has put in to building positive relationships with caregivers and the results they have realized from those efforts. These efforts have been especially important in a time of limited resources to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families.

The team recognized some of the pitfalls with successfully partnering, including negativity; communication problems; dual, blurred and lack of clarity around roles; and misinformation. They also recognized that mutual respect was a necessity to ensuring successful partnerships.

Throughout their journey towards building better (and successful!) partnerships, they have made an effort to foster positive relationships, build trust, open communication and en-

See [Partnerships](#), Page 10

## >>> YOUTH VOICE <<<

### Youth Voices from DFCS Region 12

*The Division of Family and Children Services held a youth town hall during its virtual roadshow for Region 12. Here are responses from youth participants when asked this question: **What does emotional support look like to youth?***

“emotional support looks like your case manager checking up on you when they are supposed to and being able to talk to them without judgment, my caseworker is great!”

“when the hsp helped us when a staff passed away. along with another staff, hugged us and made us stronger”

“when they care and talk to u and help u”

“emotional support is our caseworkers helps with our needs and help with our future”

“mainly them just being there for you answering and listening to your opinions and feelings”



## Resources on Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools

The upcoming school year is one unlike any other in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a broad spectrum of concerns from safety, support, well-being, and the unknowns of what to expect when school starts — whether in-person, virtually, or a hybrid of both. To provide resources and support to parents and caregivers with school-aged children, the Georgia Parent Support Network, Inc. made these concerns the focus of its statewide parent support group meeting. Dr. Garry McGiboney (Deputy Superintendent at the Georgia Department of Education (DOE)) outlined portions of the [Guidance on Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools](#) developed by DOE and the Georgia Department of Public Health. He also highlighted portions of recommendations from the following K-12 Restart Working Groups which were created to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Georgia's k-12 schools and plan for a safe 2020-2021 school year: [school meals](#), [distance learning/professional learning](#), [connectivity and devices](#), [mental health and wellness](#), supplemental learning, and [facilities/transportation and equipment](#). Available recommendations are hyperlinked to the name of each work group.

Dr. McGiboney also highlighted DOE's collaboration with the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services to provide food benefits to families and children who receive free and/or reduced lunch. This was made possible through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 which allows the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service to facilitate the distribution of Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) to families affected by coronavirus-related school closures. Families will receive a one-time allotment of \$256.50 in P-EBT benefits per child based on a calculation of \$5.07 per day for the 45 days the child missed school in Georgia. The P-EBT program will be available to children who were eligible for the national school lunch program during the 2019-2020 school year and will use data from GaDOE to determine a child's eligibility for P-EBT. Click [here](#) for more information about P-EBT — including eligibility and application information — and for other frequently asked questions.

However we continue to prepare for the school year, we should keep in mind the impact this pandemic has made on Georgia's youth. As shared by Dr. McGiboney, the artwork below were shared by various youth who expressed their views and feelings on the pandemic:



Student's Age: 5 years



Student's Age: 10 years



## **Birth Parents Share Experience in the Path to Permanency**

### *Highlighting the Voices of Birth Parents Involved in the Child Welfare System*

During the DFCS Region 12 Virtual Roadshow, birth parents shared their experience working with DFCS along the path to permanency for their children. During this virtual meeting, local and state DFCS leaders asked questions and learned about ways the child welfare system could continue to improve:

#### ***"Describe your experience working with DFCS"***

"I thank DFCS so much for not giving [up] on me. I was incarcerated and DFCS still worked with me. My case manager looked at me as more than just a file in front of them. We need more people like that. Not just for the kids, but for all of us." - Parent

"It was terrible in the beginning. I just gave birth a few weeks before and I had substances in my system. The case worker told me my kids wouldn't be taken, and then hours later, came to take the kids. I felt like the case worker made me feel bad and called me a drug addict. You don't say that to someone in that position. My daughter was only 3 weeks old. I couldn't hug or kiss her bye. It really discouraged me in the beginning. But I had great support from the case manager in family treatment court. The judge recognized what I did right and also wrong. The judge understood that we make mistakes but wanted us to learn and grow from them." - Parent

#### ***"Where can DFCS do better?"***

"They should listen when it comes to older youth and be more detailed with them when you talk to them." - Parent

"Make sure that as you visit foster parents' homes and approve the foster homes, that DFCS digs deeper in assessments to make sure that they are looking beyond whether or not there is food in the home and how the physical space looks. Have intimate conversations with the youth to make sure their concerns are addressed too." - Parent

"Visitation is a critical piece. You can't look in a child's eyes and get that motivation without the visitations." - DFCS

#### ***"What motivated you and helped you turn things around for your kids?"***

"My son expressing he wanted his mom. In visitations and hearings, it made me realize that I can't throw the towel in. I can't give up no matter how many curve balls are thrown at me. My kids gave me that. And their smile and the hope in the kids' eyes gave me the motivation to not quit." - Parent



## Preparing for the Return of Kids After Social Isolation

*Presented by Georgia Child Advocacy Center, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, GA Dept. of Education, and Prevent Child Abuse Georgia*

As students prepare to return to school and other in-person activities, it is important to keep in mind that some students have been in social and/or physical isolation for an extended period of time while other students may have been able to socialize (even if in a limited extent) prior to the start of the school year. Our preparation for their return and our diligence in checking on their well-being after they return will, for some students, be critical in restoring a sense of safety and protection. Click [here](#) to access the webinar recording and materials. Below are some highlights as provided by the webinar presentation. Thank you to Georgia Center for Child Advocacy, CHOA, GaDOE, and PCA GA for putting this together!

### Current Stressors for Youth

- ⇒ Worry and fear about COVID-19
- ⇒ Disrupted sleep schedules
- ⇒ Confusion about changing expectations
- ⇒ Adjustment to new routines
- ⇒ Loss
- ⇒ Possible strain at home (i.e. financial impact, food insecurity, abuse)

### Transition Tips to Mobility and Connectedness

- ⇒ Give youth opportunity to talk
- ⇒ Listen for clues on how they're doing
- ⇒ Offer youth choices to help them feel like they have some control
- ⇒ Let them be upset
- ⇒ Keep a routine, plan to be flexible

### Prepare Now for Your Specific Role

- ⇒ **KNOW:** Know the basic signs of abuse and trauma and their corresponding behavioral indicators
- ⇒ **EQUIP:** Equip your team to talk with youth about abuse and how to react responsibly to suspicions or disclosure
- ⇒ **REVIEW:** Review your mandated reporter protocol.

### Signs of Online Abuse

- ⇒ Pay attention to language and terms that indicate exposure to inappropriate content or people online
- ⇒ Listen for language that is not age appropriate
- ⇒ Look for behaviors that mimic what youth might have seen
- ⇒ Listen for clues that youth have made a new "friend" online

### Prevention Resources (Hyperlinked)

- ⇒ [Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children Training](#)
- ⇒ [Protecting Children During a Crisis](#)
- ⇒ [Darkness to Light's Safe Online Learning for Teachers](#)

### Parenting Resources (Hyperlinked)

- ⇒ [Info for Parents about Online Safety](#)
- ⇒ [Parenting Resources During COVID](#)
- ⇒ [PCA Georgia Helpline](#)



## 10 Reasons to Become a Foster Parent

*By Leslie McClain*

**You're going to improve a child's quality of life.** Remember that feeling of wanting to be a superhero when you were a child? Here's your chance. Foster parents are superheroes with the biggest hearts.

**You'll get a home filled with laughter and smiles.** Are you having a bad day? Coming home to children laughing will make anyone's day a little better.

**It opens your view to a whole other world.** Children entering the system allow foster parents to see the negative side of the world. However, it's allows you to understand what these children need.

**You're giving a child sense of peace when their life had been filled with chaos.** Have you ever experienced a life of chaos? Most of the youth in care have—you can help them find their calm.

**You get to learn more techie things on your phone.** I know when I fix the Wi-Fi at my mom's house, she looks at me like I just solved world peace. Now you too can have your own personal technology savior!

**You learn lots of patience.** Fostering isn't easy. Children are always accepting—they can be skeptical, scared and defensive. Through their pain, you can find understanding and have the chance to show them kindness.

**You are a lifelong support system for children.** Parenting doesn't end at 18. Many youths need advice and guidance when transitioning to adulthood.

**You don't feel challenged? Foster a child.** Each and every child is unique and comes from different homelife. You'll get to work with many different people from caseworkers, therapists, doctors, and lawyers. Each day is different.

**There are not enough homes for older children and sibling groups.** The relationship between siblings is unmeasurable. It is absolutely devastating to these youth when they

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## Keep Safe Online

With an increase in telework and distant learning, it is important to remain diligent in safety awareness when using the internet to learn, work, and communicate. Below are some highlighted tips, and you can click [here](#) to learn more:

⇒ Know your friends, contacts, and followers.

⇒ Review your account and internet browser settings.

⇒ Be mindful of third parties and connected apps that may access your social media profile.

⇒ Report inappropriate message or images to [CyberTipline.org](#)



**YOU ARE  
NOT  
ALONE**

**Stigma and discrimination have caused so many of us to suffer. Let's break down stigma so no one struggles in silence.**

#NotAlone

[nami.org/minoritymentalhealth](https://nami.org/minoritymentalhealth)



## State of Hope Sites Provide Community Support in DFCS Region 12

*Highlighted by Jansen Head, OCA Deputy Director*

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) held its virtual roadshow in Region 12 and part of the virtual journey connected the DFCS State of Hope (SOH) sites with local leadership to explore what each site offers and to identify any existing gaps for children and families in the region. State of Hope is a network that encourages non-profits, philanthropies, government, businesses, and communities to collaborate closely to build local safety nets that will allow children and families to thrive. SOH aims to address statewide needs such as awareness of trauma-informed practices, improved quality of caregiving, and opportunities to help individuals and families become economically self-sufficient and live in safe homes.

For Region 12, SOH participants included Vira Salzburn (Program Director with the [Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council](#)), Ally Christianson (Founding Director of [Hope 1312 Collective](#)), and Zerik Samples (Chief Development Officer with the [Coastal Georgia Area Community Action Authority](#)). Below is a summary of the discussions. If you would like to partner or support these efforts, please use the links in this article to contact these community leaders.

### Needs Identified in Region 12:

- Support to families with youth not returning to in-person learning
- Training the community, especially elders, on how to use technology to apply for benefits, conduct research, and connect with people and services
- Access to affordable housing and child care
- Support those transitioning out of the military
- Support families who are homeless to prevent their children from coming into foster care due to lack of housing
- Increase resources and access to mental health services
- Increase resources and access to reliable transportation

### SOH Efforts to Fulfill Needs in Region 12:

- Partnering with other counties throughout Region 12 and with other SOH sites to share and expand resources virtually
- One SOH site was awarded funding to support the homeless population in Liberty County
- Liberty County has an office that supports individuals transitioning out of the military
- One city received a grant for a pilot project to help grandparents support their grandchildren in virtual learning
- One entity plans to conduct a pilot project for in-home parent coaching to prevent placement disruptions





## Cobb County Celebrates Graduating Youth in Foster Care

*As originally reported and photographed by the [Marietta Daily Journal](#)*

Dozens of graduates were met with a parade of cheers, bell ringing, and signs from their foster families, case workers, and community leaders to celebrate their graduations from high school, GED program, and college. "We just wanted to honor them and let them know we're so proud of them," said LaSondra Boddie, Director of Cobb County DFCS. After the parade of celebration, DFCS leaders and others, including State Rep. Bert Reeves (R-Marietta), and Cobb County Juvenile Court Judge Wayne Grannis spoke to the graduates. "I want to applaud you for what you've overcome. Your commitment is outstanding," State Rep. Bert Reeves told the graduates. "You have the opportunity to have an impact on your community, your family, and your close circle for the rest of your lives."



McEachern High School graduate LaMya shows a sign at the parade reading, "You are amazing!" Each of the dozen graduates who attended had a sign with their name on it.



Several cars were decorated with signs and driven by local and state leaders to celebrate youth in foster care who recently graduated.



Several participants in the graduation parade held signs and noise makers to celebrate this milestone for the graduates.



Centrell (pictured left) is a graduate of Martin Luther King Jr. High School, and Kyle (picture right) participated in the graduation parade.



**FOSTER, CONT'D...**

are split apart to be placed—for some children, these are the only family they have. Another challenge is finding homes for older youth. Many families want the younger children and infants—leaving older youth to feel unwanted. They also need help finding a home and succeeding in life.

**Change Future Generations—Break the Cycle of Abuse.** Without interference, children who have been submersed around abuse have a greater chance of continuing that cycle when they are older—possibly in their own families. As a loving and healthy foster home, you have the opportunity to set a good example of what that environment that child should grow up in. Hopefully your home will provide the same environment for their own future home as well—thus breaking the cycle.

- ▶ Youth start to imagine a different future because they realize that things can be different.
- ▶ Youth gain (or re-gain) agency and experience pride.
- ▶ Youth begin to slow down and become better able to regulate themselves.

I have recently had the opportunity to witness several transformational relationships in action. It is truly incredible to see the impact of a committed and supportive adult on a young person's life.

In one instance, a young lady became upset during a virtual meeting and walked away from the screen. One of her adult supporters called her and convinced her to re-join the meeting. Upon her return to the meeting, no one became upset with her for being frustrated and leaving. She was met with nothing but supportive adults who were there to listen, be "real", and show up for her in what was a difficult time for her.

In another instance, a young man with his own history of trauma and

**TRANSFORMATION, CONT'D...**

Transformational relationships involve an adult:

- ▶ Listening to the youth.
- ▶ Being persistent with the youth over time.
- ▶ Being "real" with the youth.
- ▶ Challenging the youth.
- ▶ Showing up for the youth in times of crisis.
- ▶ Loving the youth.

When the adults in a young person's life commit to interacting with the youth in these ways, some amazing things can happen:

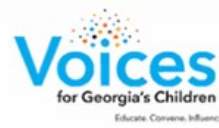
- ▶ Youth see that they matter.

Transformational relationships...	Workers who excel at these relationships...
Start with youth being heard	Pay attention, listen without judging youth as good or bad, look for the person beyond the case
Involve persistence over time	Are remarkably persistent, don't give up, try again and again to get a relationship started, and stick with it over a long period even when the relationship faces significant challenges
Require workers to be "real"	Reveal themselves to some extent, convey something in common with the youth, understand the world the youth comes from
Involve challenging the youth	Challenge, push and do so in a way that encourages youth to reflect; say and do the difficult things even when youth don't want to hear it
Take advantage of crises	Show up when not expected, stand by youth when they're in trouble and help youth distinguish moments of failure from being a failure





## School-Based Mental Health: A Virtual Town Hall



**Highlighted by Jansen Head, OCA Deputy Director**

**Students are experiencing new** and, in some cases, severe challenges related to the pandemic and changes in ways of learning for school. The Carter Center, Georgia Appleseed Center for Law, and Georgia Voices have partnered together to kick off their virtual town hall series focused on students' mental health and access to services in Georgia. The panelists included representatives from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), Department of Education (DOE), CarePartners of Georgia, Georgia State University, View Point Health, Aspire Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and the hosting organizations.

***"We have to flexibly meet the needs of students. One size does not fit all."***

Flexibility and humility was a consistent theme throughout the discussion. One of the panelists, David Crooke (CEO of CarePartners of Georgia), explained how the 36 schools they serve have taken the approach to "flexibly meet the needs of students." They recognized that some students are in foster care, home school, hospital/home bound, and in other circumstances that need tailored care to meet the students where they are. For students who have experienced or are currently experiencing trauma, the panelists recognized the need to maintain certainty and access to services and support in ways not done before. One of the panelists, Nicole Patten (Youth and Young Adult Services Coordinator for Aspire BHDD), explained that program from direct services to specialty services went 100% virtual without having the time or notice to meet with all stakeholders. In a pandemic of the unknown, structure and stability are important for students and their mental health. Although most services they provide are through video, they provide services in the clinical setting where some students and families do not have access to the internet.

***"You have to understand the time and place you are in right now."***

Another panelist, Chad Jones (Director of Community Services for View Point Health), was asked how he and his team had to adapt to the pandemic while also serving the students. "First of all, you have to have humility. You have to understand the time and place you are in right now. This is novel. Secondly, you got to have a team that can come through and be open-minded. You can't have folks say, 'we've never done that before' or 'I didn't sign up for this.' No one has done this before and no one has signed up for this [pandemic]. Third, you have to be flexible. If you're going to say that you are going out there to meet the needs of the children and families you serve, then you need to meet the needs of the children and families you serve." To hear more about what agencies and service providers are doing to serve and support students, check out the recording of this town hall [here](#) and click [here](#) for resources provided from this virtual town hall.



**Partnerships, Cont'd...** sure frequent opportunities for communication exist, and be transparent and honest. In return, they have found that mutual respect has been realized and improved partnerships have been formed.

**Some specific examples of these efforts include:**

- ◇ Ask the caregiver to be direct with their questions and needs and ensure DFCS staff is responsive to those questions and needs
- ◇ Call foster parents after a child has left their home to check in on how they're doing
- ◇ Send handwritten notes of appreciation
- ◇ Share the DFCS on-call schedule with caregivers
- ◇ Provide caregivers with 24/7 access to the Regional Director, County Director, and CRRU Administrator
- ◇ Partner with foster parents to recognize foster care month
- ◇ Help caregivers understand the entirety of a case manager's job
- ◇ Ask caregivers to teach DFCS staff caregiving tips to those who aren't familiar, such as the proper way to install a car seat and strap a child into his car seat
- ◇ Invite caregivers to key meetings
- ◇ Raise up examples of positive partnership parenting and celebrate parent successes and reunifications

**Successful Partnerships in Action**



Just this month, local faith communities in the Clarke County area held an appreciation parade for DFCS staff.

**Chosen for Life Ministries** shared pictures of the event on Facebook saying "What a fun morning! Covid-19 can't stop us from shouting a big THANK YOU to our local DFCS staff. We had a great time smiling thanking these hard working individuals for all that they do for children and families. And thank you to **The Awakening** and **Faith Presbyterian Church** for your support!"

**25 Years of Changing Children's Lives**



THIS DAY IN HISTORY | JULY 17, 1995



**On July 17, 1995,** Julia Neighbors (Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Director and Georgia CASA Board Member) and Jen King (Georgia CASA Executive Director) launched their professional careers with Georgia CASA. For 25 years, they have served in a variety of capacities at the state and local levels within the Georgia CASA network, from program development director, program operations director, trainer, consultant, local director, committee member, board member, and state director. They continue to share a passion and commitment to child advocacy and a 25-year friendship.

Interested in learning more about Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates? You can be an everyday hero helping children in foster care in your community! Visit their website at [gacasa.org](http://gacasa.org) or email [info@gacasa.org](mailto:info@gacasa.org) for more information.

As a **CASA volunteer**, you can make a difference in your community by giving a child hope for a brighter childhood and future.



The **effects of trauma** may make it harder for youth to:

- Trust others
- Control physical and emotional responses to stress
- Deal with life's changes
- Form positive relationships
- Learn how to function in school or other group situations

Teens and older youth need supportive adults who can be **patient, compassionate** and **understanding**.



This month on social media, Georgia DFCS has been highlighting the importance of permanency for sibling groups and teenagers in foster care.

For many children entering foster care with siblings, the sibling bond is the only constant in their lives and many children feel more secure being placed with their siblings.

Older youth in foster care are more likely to be placed in congregate care or group home settings rather than a residential foster home.

Click [here](#) to learn more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent . You can also click [here](#) to learn more about how you can positively influence teens in foster care.

**Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program NOW OPEN!**



Website with instructions for eligible families



Financial assistance with food purchases



Families of students who receive free and/or reduced lunch may qualify



Eligible for purchases made in-store, online or via delivery at approved grocery retailers



**Children have better outcomes** when they maintain **ties with their siblings**.



Families with children who are eligible for free and/or reduced price lunch can now apply. Application available [here](#).

**TRANSFORMATION, CONT'D...**

drug use was afforded an opportunity to participate in rehab. While he initially struggled with agreeing to it and seeing the benefits, he is currently making progress and coming to terms with the complexities surrounding his drug use. He has been able to process some of his trauma, identify some of his triggers, and learn healthier ways to cope. While this will likely be a long journey for him, he has been surrounded by committed adults who have been persistent with him, challenged him, and loved him throughout it all – even when he made poor decisions.

I've heard more than once from a young person that they can tell when someone is "real" or genuine. That sense that they get about us adults is in line with whether they think we care about them or we're just there to check off some boxes.

The lessons from the study are seemingly simple, yet much more difficult to implement due to the complexities associated with relationships. However, children and young adults (especially those who have encountered some difficulties) need adults in their lives who will show them empathy and listen to them so that they're heard; who will challenge them when they need to be challenged; who will be there for them through the ups and downs; and who will love and care about them so they feel supported.

To read the "Transformational Relationships for Youth Success Report" in full, click [here](#).



## **It's Not Too Late To Complete the 2020 Census: Remember to Count Infants and Young Children Too!**

**The 2020 Census will help** our government figure out how much money each state should receive for important programs for the next decade. In the 2010 Census, the nation missed more than 2 million children under age five: as a result, states lose over a half-a-billion dollars every year for health care, foster care, and child care. An undercount in 2020 could affect how much support programs that serve families and their young children receive, such as schools, child care and early learning, health insurance, hospitals, and food assistance. If you are filling out the census for your home, you should count everyone who is living there as of April 1, 2020 (Census Day). This includes anyone who is living and sleeping there most of the time, including children.



Count children in the home where they live and sleep most of the time, even if their parents don't live there.



If a child's time is divided between more than one home, count them where they stay most often. If their time is evenly divided, or you don't know where they stay most often, count them where they were staying on April 1, 2020.



If a child's family (or guardian) moved during March or April 2020, count them at the address where they lived on April 1, 2020.



Count children in your home if they don't have a permanent place to live and were staying in your home on April 1, 2020, even if they are only staying with you temporarily.



Count newborn babies at the home where they will live and sleep most of the time, even if they were still in the hospital on April 1, 2020.

**Filling out the Census is  
safe, convenient, and quick!**

Whether or not you received a form in the mail, you can complete the 2020 Census online at [2020Census.gov](https://2020Census.gov) or call by PHONE at 844-330-2020. Visit [census.georgia.gov](https://census.georgia.gov) for more information.

**Every.  
One.  
Counts.**





## COVID-19 Economic Impact Payments: FAQs for Child Welfare Attorneys



The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, is a federal statute intended to help mitigate the significant economic consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic. Signed into law on March 27, 2020, the Act provides financial relief to individuals, organizations and businesses. The National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) published a FAQ sheet that summarizes NACC's current understanding of how the CARES Act (and related legislation) may impact youth and families in the child welfare system. It aims to provide child welfare practitioners with information that may be relevant to their clients and to raise awareness regarding eligibility for these payments. Click [here](#) to access NACC's FAQ sheet.

## Tip Sheet: Advocacy and Child's Attorney-Client Relationships During COVID-19

In the uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of life have dramatically changed — schools, court hearings, social events. What has not changed, however, are the critical and urgent needs of youth involved in the child welfare system. Many attorneys, and particularly those who represent young people, may be struggling with questions regarding their obligations in a moment of social distancing and widespread anxiety. Youth involved in the child welfare system need and deserve robust advocacy in this time period. The underlying needs of youth — the what — remains the same; it is the method of advocacy and service delivery — the how — that may need to be adjusted. Click [here](#) to access NACC's tip sheet.



## Keeping Yourself and Your Kids Safe and Health in the Pandemic: Tips for Judges, Legal Professionals, and Court Personnel



Helping the kids that we serve stay safe and healthy can be a challenge under ordinary circumstances, but now with the health hazards of COVID-19, the various guidance around what is safe, and the stress associated with social distancing or not being able to socially distance, the challenge may feel insurmountable. The calming presence and steadying influence that you provide to youth, their families, and your co-workers is the single most powerful antidote to the fears, frustrations, confusion, and grief caused by these uncertain times that can escalate into a meltdown or crisis. To have that crucial positive influence, it's essential that you "put on your oxygen mask first" by monitoring how you are handling the stressors that we are all facing. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) published a fact sheet that offers helpful questions to think about it and provides basic steps to help youth navigate through their stress during the pandemic. Click [here](#) to access NCTSN's tip sheet.



**Hotline Help: Connecting Your Needs to Resources**

*A Highlight of Many Free Resources Available to Assist You*

**GA Crisis & Access Line  
1-800-715-4225**

GCAL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year to help you or someone you care for in a crisis.

**1-855-GA-CHILD  
(1-855-422-4453)**

Report concerns or suspected child abuse.

**CRISIS TEXT LINE**

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor. Free support is available 24/7.

**GA COVID-19  
Emotional Support Line  
1-866-399-8938**

The Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line provides 24/7 free and confidential assistance to callers needing emotional support or resource information as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Emotional Support Line is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals and others who have received training in crisis counseling.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-8255**

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-7233**

Highly trained expert advocates are available 24/7 to talk confidentially with anyone in the U.S. experiencing domestic violence, seeking resources or information, or questioning unhealthy aspects of their relationship.

**CARES Warm Line  
1-844-326-5400**

Call or text the CARES Warm Line for substance abuse challenges every day of the year from 8:30AM - 11:00PM.

**Peer2Peer Warm Line  
1-888-945-1414**

The Warm Line provides Georgians the opportunity to receive peer support over the phone 24 hours a day.

**SAMHSA's National Helpline  
1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

Free, confidential, and available 24/7/365, this service from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) can help you find treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations in your area.

**Virtual Events: Available Now and Upcoming!**



- ✓ J4C Webinar on GAL Advocacy in Dependency Cases. Access webinar [here](#). Use access passcode: **2Z@8+\$51**.
- ✓ J4C Webinar on Advocacy in a Judicial Emergency. Access webinar [here](#). Click [here](#) for presentation slides. Use access passcode: **5s\*x+VJ2**.
- ✓ August 4: COVID-19 Disparities Webinar on How to Support Racial & Ethnic Minority Students. More info [here](#).
- ✓ August 5: COVID-19 and Georgia's Students in Foster Care: Expectations, Advocacy, and Special Needs Webinar presented by Craig Goodmark on behalf of OCA. More info [here](#).
- ✓ August 24-28: NACC's 43rd National Child Welfare Law Virtual Conference. More info [here](#).
- ✓ September 10: Deepening Engagement—Keeping Kids in School during a Pandemic by Georgia Appleseed and Truancy Intervention Project. More info [here](#).



## BE A SUMMIT SPONSOR/EXHIBITOR!

The Georgia Office of the Child Advocate, Supreme Court of Georgia's Committee on Justice for Children, the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, and Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates are pleased to host the 4th Annual Summit: Georgia's Child Welfare Conference on **November 18-20, 2020** at **The Hotel at Avalon**. The Summit is an exciting opportunity for child welfare professionals throughout the state to share best practices and continue the advancement of child welfare practice in Georgia. Attendees have included policy advocates, judges, attorneys, guardians ad litem, court appointed special advocates, judicial staff, providers, and several other professionals who serve an important role in caring and supporting the children and families throughout the state.

As you begin allocating your annual sponsorship budgets, please be aware of the many opportunities available at the 2020 Summit. Each sponsorship offers a variety of benefits, visibility, and a return on your investment. Only child welfare service providers and partners may purchase a conference exhibit table. Exhibitors/Sponsors are prohibited from selling products or taking orders for future sales.

**With a significant increase in participation, there is a limited number of exhibit tables available for the 2020 Summit.** We hope you will join us to greet over 600 attendees at #TheSummit for another successful conference. Please contact AK Consulting Group to register as a sponsor and/or exhibitor by calling 850-523-4200 or emailing [judy@akconsultinggroup.org](mailto:judy@akconsultinggroup.org).

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*For general inquiries, assistance, or to file a complaint, please contact us by phone at (404) 656-4200 or on our website at <https://oca.georgia.gov/webform/request-oca-assistance-or-investigation>*

*To submit an article, photo, or event for the newsletter, please contact Deputy Director Jansen Head at [jhead@oca.ga.gov](mailto:jhead@oca.ga.gov).*

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