

ADVOCACY AT THE CORE

2023 Kentucky CASA Conference

Empowering Advocates. Empowering Children

October 4, 2023
Lexington, Kentucky

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

ADVOCACY AT THE CORE: 2023 KENTUCKY CASA CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2023

7:45 - 8:30 **REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST** | Lobby

8:30 - 9:45 **WELCOME REMARKS & KEYNOTE** | Ballroom

Remarks by Suzanne Blazar, Kentucky CASA Network, Board Chair
Keynote Address: "Three Little Words" by Ashley Rhodes-Courter, LCSW

9:45 - 10:00 **BREAK** | Exhibit Area

10:00 - 11:30 **BREAKOUT SESSION I**

1A - Best Interest of the Child: Strengthening Families by Enhancing Advocacy Through Collaboration
1B - Demystifying Kentucky Foster Youth Benefits
1C - A Master Plan to Building and Sustaining Provider Relationships
1D - Practical Tips for Safe Home Visiting
1E - White Privilege by Osmosis: Straddling Two Worlds as a Transracial Adoptee
1F - Excellence in Board Governance: A Roadmap in Cultivating, Creating, and Implementing a Strategic Plan for Your CASA Program

11:30 - 11:45 **BREAK** | Exhibit Area

11:45 - 1:00 **AWARDS LUNCHEON** | Ballroom

Sponsored by Kosair for Kids
Remarks by Andrea Bruns, Kentucky CASA Network, State Director/CEO
Mini Plenary with Cameron Galloway

1:00 - 1:15 **BREAK** | Exhibit Area

1:15 - 2:45 **BREAKOUT SESSION II**

2A - Disrupting Stigma and Using Empathy and Accountability to Improve Outcomes for Families
2B - Kentucky's Safety Model: An Update on DCBS Policies for Decision-Making
2C - Family Recovery Court and Creating a Recovery Ecosystem
2D - Court Process 101: Your Map to Better Understanding DNA Court
2E - An Introduction to Best Practices for Serving Kentucky's LGBTQIA+ Youth
2F - Elevating Your Board for Effective Board Governance: Assessing Your Readiness for Engaging in Strategic Planning

2:45 - 3:15 **NETWORKING BREAK** | Exhibit Area

3:15 - 4:15 **AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION** | Ballroom

Judges Panel: Q&A on Court Trends and Best Practices with Family Court Judges moderated by Lucinda Masterton, Retired Fayette County Family Court Judge, Kentucky CASA Network Board Member

4:15 - 4:30 **CLOSING REMARKS** | Ballroom

Remarks by Andrea Bruns, Kentucky CASA Network, State Director/CEO



PLENARY SESSIONS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - *Three Little Words* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter, LCSW

8:30 - 9:45 AM | Ballroom

What three little words could change your life? In her most-requested keynote, Ashley Rhodes-Courter, LCSW, shares her personal story of survival, breaking barriers, and beating the odds. Ashley spent nearly a decade in the foster care system as a child and experienced extreme child abuse and neglect. Today, she is an award-winning New York Times Bestselling Author and CEO. Laugh, cry, and be motivated by her first-hand experiences and unique expertise.



Since her first national keynote at age 14, Ashley Rhodes-Courter has shared her story with thousands in the United States and in over 7 countries. Ashley was born to a single teen mother. By the age of 3 she was in Florida's foster care system where she spent almost 10 years being shuttled between 14 homes - some quite abusive - before being adopted from a Children's Home at the age of 12. Despite her ordeal, she excelled in school because she believed that "my education was the one thing nobody could take from me." Early in her life she felt compelled to advocate for herself and the other children she lived with, particularly in abusive foster homes.

Her efforts and academic achievements landed her Eckerd College's Trustee Scholarship where she graduated early, with honors, earning a double major in Communications and Theater and a double minor in Political Science and Psychology. Ashley then went on to earn a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California.

During her undergraduate studies, she was one of 20 college students selected for the USA Today All-USA Academic Team and was named one of GLAMOUR Magazine's Top Ten College Women. She was also selected as one of the four Golden BRICK Award winners for outstanding advocacy for community change by DoSomething!. As part of their campaign, she was featured on 25 million bags of Cool Ranch Doritos. Ashley has received state, local, and national awards for her speaking, advocacy, and philanthropy. She has spoke on Capitol Hill and has been invited to the White House twice. Her largest audience was a sold-out arena of over 20,000.

By the age of 22, Ashley had become a New York Times Bestselling Author. Her first book, "Three Little Words" is now an international bestseller and has been published in at least 4 countries. Her second book, "Three More Words" debuted at #1 on Amazon Bestseller's List. Both books are used in classrooms across the country in various community and First Year Experience Collegiate programs. "Three Little Words" is now being made into a major motion picture.

In December 2021, Ashley was one of 10 incredibly inspiring women showcased on the televised special on NBC for their amazing "Women of Worth" work by L'Oreal Paris, honoring the intrinsic worth of everyday women inspiring others and creating positive change in their communities. Ashley has been featured on CNN, Good Morning America, Today Show, New York Times, USA Today, Women's World Magazine, Roadtrip Nation, GLAMOUR Magazine, and many more top global outlets.

AWARDS LUNCHEON MINI PLENARY - Cameron Galloway

11:45 AM - 1:00 PM | Ballroom

Cameron Galloway spent more than 15 years in foster care. This experience led him to serve as an advocate for youth in a variety of ways, including working in youth development, as an advocate for Voices of the Commonwealth (an advocacy group made up of foster youth and alumni), and testifying in front of the Kentucky State Senate and the House of Representatives Committee on House Bill 158 (the Foster Youth Bill of Rights). Cameron will share his experience and convey how various adults in the lives of children involved in the child welfare system – including CASA volunteers – can truly make an impact.

CLOSING PLENARY - Judges Panel: Q&A on Court Trends and Best Practices with Family Court Judges

Moderator: Judge Lucinda Masterton (retired, Fayette County)

Panelists: Judge Denise Brown (Jefferson County), Judge Gina Calvert (Jefferson County), Judge Ross Ewing (Fayette County), Judge Mica Wood Pence (Barren and Metcalfe Counties)

3:15 - 4:15 PM | Ballroom

This session will allow CASA volunteers, staff, and board members the opportunity to hear from a panel of Family Court Judges from throughout the state. Judges will discuss trends and issues currently present in their dependency, neglect, and abuse dockets and factors that affect permanency for children involved in the child welfare system. Judges will also offer their insights on how child welfare advocates can have an impact on the cases in their courtrooms. Participants are invited to come prepared with questions for the judges and should note that specific cases will not be discussed.

BREAKOUT SESSION I (10:00 - 11:30 AM)

1A - Best Interest of the Child: Strengthening Families by Enhancing Advocacy Through Collaboration | Clark Dr. Andrea Sivanich and Meredith Russo (Center for Children and Family Futures)

Children, youth, and families who experience systems involvement due to substance use and mental health disorders do not exist in isolation. Healing this population requires a cross-system collaborative, family-centered, and trauma-informed approach that focuses on family voice, well-being, safety, permanency, and recovery. Children, youth, and families involved in child welfare systems deserve to receive the necessary services, supports, and high-quality, frequent family time to strengthen their families while mitigating risk and building on protective factors to achieve stability and reunification.

1B - Demystifying Kentucky Foster Youth Benefits | Fayette Paula Saenz and Jeff Culver (Cabinet for Health and Family Services)

This workshop will review the benefits, qualification requirements, and process for accessing benefits available to Kentucky transition age foster youth, including access to cell phones, funds for extracurricular activities, supports for obtaining driver's license and car insurance, career preparation, tuition benefits, and even how foster youth can get paid to pursue their GED or a vocational certificate. An overview of the LYFT/ Life Skills Reimagined online independent living curriculum (which is mandatory for entering an independent living program) will also be provided.

1C - A Master Plan to Building and Sustaining Provider Relationships | Bourbon Chris Hempfling (Brightspring Health Services)

In our systems of limited resources, it's critically important for advocates to know how to maximize their time to achieve the best results for the children they serve. The proactive development of strong collaborative relationships among all stakeholders in the child well-being system is vital in your success. Come join this session as we discuss concrete strategies for how to enhance communications, operational visibility, collaboration, and improve your overall child advocacy strategies.

1D - Practical Tips for Safe Home Visiting | Coldstream I & II Kent Conder (KVC Behavioral Health Kentucky)

This session empowers social service professionals and volunteers with practical strategies necessary for their personal safety. The training enhances awareness of surroundings as well as general situational awareness before, during, after, and between home visits. Participants will gain an understanding of the different types of home-visitor "styles," how to prepare for a home visit, and strategies for mitigating a crisis situation during home visits.

1E - White Privilege by Osmosis: Straddling Two Worlds as a Transracial Adoptee | Coldstream IV Angela Tucker (The Adopted Life)

Transracial caregiving is a multifaceted journey for the entire family, but it is often the child who bears the brunt of navigating the complexity of the experience. It is critical that caregivers, parents, and child welfare professionals understand the history of why children of color are over-represented in child-welfare in order to avoid perpetuating racism. With this understanding, advocates can instead embrace an anti-racist outlook to support the health and wellbeing of transracial adoptees and/or transracial foster youth. This workshop will provide a window into the nuanced first-hand narratives of adoptees through videos, anonymized case studies, and Angela's personal stories. Angela will share her personal experience as a transracial adoptee, as well as the insights of other transracial adoptees to highlight the intersection of racism and classism in child welfare. This interactive workshop will leave you thinking about the role transracial adoption plays in our quest for racial justice in America.

1F - Excellence in Board Governance: A Roadmap in Cultivating, Creating, and Implementing a Strategic Plan for Your CASA Program | Coldstream V Gregory Nielsen (Nielsen Training & Consulting, LLC)

Strategic planning can sometimes seem like a daunting undertaking. There is hope, and a path to a far more energizing and effective plan. A strategic plan serves as a roadmap to enable an organization to set priorities and measure progress. This interactive workshop takes the fear out of strategic planning. Combining interactive discussions with presentation, attendees will learn about the value of developing a culture of planning while understanding the components of an effective, inclusive planning process. We will also explore ways to manage the critical inflection point of translating vision into reality by seamlessly moving from planning to implementation.

BREAKOUT SESSION II (1:15 - 2:45 PM)

2A - Disrupting Stigma and Using Empathy and Accountability to Improve Outcomes for Families | Clark Dr. Andrea Sivanich and Meredith Russo (Center for Children and Family Futures)

Stigma about substance use disorders affects the attitudes of court, treatment, and social service professionals, families, community members, and the individuals themselves—creating barriers for people seeking to engage in services. Disrupting stigma and using empathy with accountability enhances information gathering efforts and increases meaningful engagement through relationship building and cross-systems collaboration. At the same time, it promotes protective factors, resiliency, and overall family well-being, thereby improving outcomes for families affected by substance use disorders.

2B - Kentucky's Safety Model: An Update on DCBS Policies for Decision-Making | Fayette Chelsea Harrod (Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Division of Protection and Permanency)

DCBS staff are tasked with making a variety of decisions impacting children and youth, from whether a report meets acceptance criteria for child welfare intervention to determining the finding of an allegation of abuse, neglect, or dependency, as well as decisions in active cases such as removals, placement changes, and reunifications. These decisions are guided by various processes and regulations, some of which have changed recently. This session will provide an overview of Kentucky's Safety Model, including review of new Structured Decision-Making tools, acceptance criteria, and other recent regulatory changes. Participants will better understand DCBS protocols and identify who to contact if they have questions about reporting or active cases.

2C - Family Recovery Court and Creating a Recovery Ecosystem | Bourbon Judge Clint J. Harris, Juris Doctor (Family Court Judge, Kentucky 41st Judicial Court); Maegan Mayne, LCSW, TCADC (Volunteers of America Mid States); Sue Fox, TRADPSS (Volunteers of America Mid States)

This presentation will describe best practices in treatment for caregivers in recovery, including the Family Recovery Court (FRC) model. The FRC model addresses the issue of parental substance use disorder to increase family reunification rates and decrease the duration of out-of-home care for families involved with the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS). The program offers a collaborative approach which includes a specialized FRC team made up of members from VOA, Administrative Office of the Courts, and DCBS, as well as other important community stakeholders and partners. The FRC model aims to assist individuals in achieving long-term sobriety and the speakers will discuss Volunteers of America's successful efforts in creating a recovery ecosystem for individuals in all stages of recovery from substance use disorder. Attendees will understand the unique needs of caregivers in recovery and learn best practices for treating substance use disorder.

2D - Court Process 101: Your Map to Better Understanding DNA Court | Coldstream I & II Laken Albrink (University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law)

Are you confused by the court process? You are not alone! Navigating the court system can be intimidating and confusing. This workshop will teach you the basics of Kentucky's Dependency, Neglect and Abuse court system, including hearing overviews and timeframe requirements. The session will also review the rights and obligations of parents and possible safeguards for third party non-parents raising children. The presenter will review tips for court reporting and provide helpful legal resources.

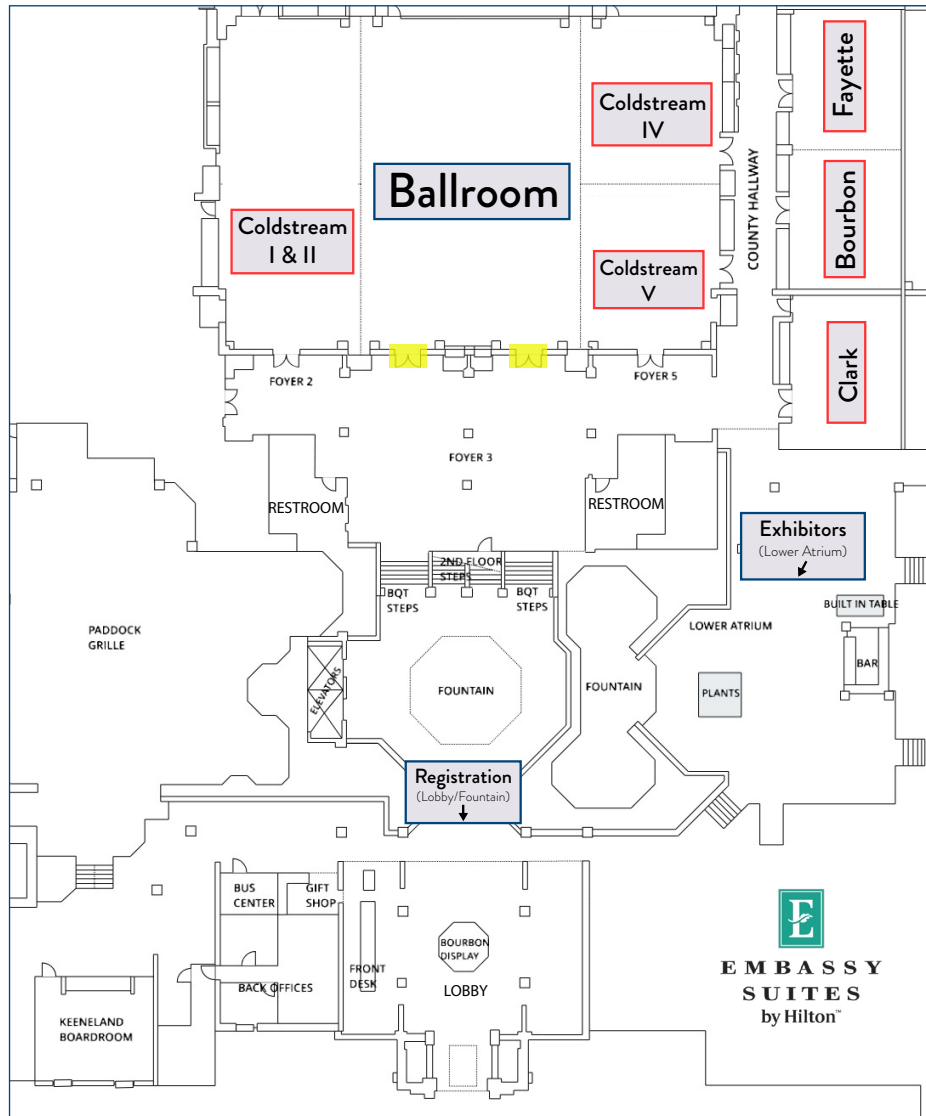
2E - An Introduction to Best Practices for Serving Kentucky's LGBTQIA+ Youth | Coldstream IV Dr. Miles Feroli (Eastern Kentucky University)

This workshop will equip participants with the knowledge and tools to understand LGBTQIA+ identity. The workshop will define the differences between gender, sex, and sexuality, provide recommendations for inclusive language, and explore how identity impacts how we see ourselves and others. Participants will learn best practices for serving LGBTQIA+ youth in Kentucky through case scenarios.

2F - Elevating Your Board for Effective Board Governance: Assessing Your Readiness for Engaging in Strategic Planning | Coldstream V Gregory Nielsen (Nielsen Training & Consulting, LLC)

Join non-profit consultant Greg Nielsen for an interactive discussion to help you determine your board's readiness for strategic planning or a board retreat. As part of the KCN's Board Governance Project, Greg will provide an overview of services he can provide to local CASA programs to include assessing your program's readiness to engage in strategic planning and hosting a board retreat. The session will include a facilitated question and answer session on successful strategic planning for a CASA program, with opportunities for attendees to ask questions on topics that include engaging your stakeholders, avoiding mission drift, and selecting board members for your planning team.

CONFERENCE MAP



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Note: To receive Kentucky Board of Social Work CEUs, please use the designated sign-in sheet for each breakout session you attend.

CASA Best-Interest Advocacy



This year's event, **Advocacy at the Core: 2023 Kentucky CASA Conference**, provides breakout sessions centered around the Core Model of CASA best interest advocacy, which includes the following components of the CASA role: **Learn, Engage, Recommend, Collaborate, and Report**. In addition, the KCN has curated breakout sessions for board members that follow a Board Governance track.

See below for a snapshot of the elements of the CASA Core Model that are captured in each of the breakout sessions. Full session names and descriptions can be found on pages 4-5 of this program and on the Whova app.

BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS

	CLARK	FAYETTE	BOURBON	COLDSTREAM I & II	COLDSTREAM IV	COLDSTREAM V
10:00 - 11:30 AM	1A: Collaborative Advocacy (CLB, REC)	1B: KY Foster Youth Benefits (REC)	1C: Provider Relationships (CLB)	1D: Safe Home Visiting (LRN, ENG)	1E: White Privilege by Osmosis (ENG)	1F: Excellence in Board Governance (BG)
1:15 - 2:45 PM	2A: Disrupting Stigma and Using Empathy (LRN)	2B: Kentucky's Safety Model (CLB)	2C: Family Recovery Court (REC, CLB)	2D: Court Process 101 (REC, RPT)	2E: Serving Kentucky's LGBTQIA+ Youth (ENG, REC)	2F: Readiness for Strategic Planning (BG)

LRN: Learn ENG: Engage REC: Recommend CLB: Collaborate RPT: Report BG: Board Governance

Kentucky CASA Network, Inc.

1640 Lyndon Farm Court, Suite 108
Louisville, KY 40223
(502) 238-2154

www.kentuckycasanetwork.org



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