

# Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri

## FAMILY COURT ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER  
625 E. 26TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64108

J. DALE YOUNGS, JUDGE  
DIVISION 6

(816) 435-4711  
FAX: (816) 435-8016

October 30, 2018

Re: Representation of Parents at Family Court  
Protective Custody Docket Attorney Project

Dear Bar Leader:

We here at the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit's Family Court need your help. As you know, we rely heavily on the willingness of attorneys in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area to accept appointments from Family Court to represent parties to delinquency, abuse and neglect, and termination of parental rights cases heard here. The special relationship we have with our local bar in this regard provides not only a great service to the Court, but invaluable assistance to the parents and children we serve.

Under the law, when a child is removed from the family home because of allegations of abuse and/or neglect, a hearing must be held within three days of the removal. This hearing is called a protective custody (PC) hearing, and each of our Commissioners presides over one PC docket each week. Parents have a right to an attorney in these cases, including appointed counsel if they qualify; however, because the PC hearing occurs relatively quickly, it is often difficult to appoint counsel for qualified parents in time for them to appear at the hearing. Our experience and the experience of other courts around the country has shown that, if parents are represented at this early stage of the case when critical decisions are being made about whether the child can be safely returned to the home, whether there are safe relatives or others who could be a temporary placement resource for the child, what services can and should be offered to the family, etc., the outcomes for the case are better, and can be realized more quickly.

In coordination with Casey Family Programs and the Family Court Attorney Workgroup, the Court is piloting a program that will provide a pool of volunteer attorneys who are licensed in Missouri and who either reside or work in Jackson County to serve as attorneys for a parent at these dockets. Each volunteer would serve as a docket attorney at one docket each month, for a period of six months. Volunteers would not be required to represent any party beyond the PC hearing, and would receive a year-long exemption from Family Court appointments. In addition, The Court and the Family Court Attorney Workgroup will provide free training to volunteer attorneys – a total of three hours of Missouri CLE credit, including one hour of ethics credit. Of course, volunteer attorneys will also gain invaluable courtroom experience and the knowledge that they are providing a service to families who are in need of assistance during what is often a time of great crisis.

October 30, 2018  
Page 2

This is where we need you. I would appreciate it if you could please forward this letter and the attached flier for the December 12, 2018 training program to your members, and encourage them to contact Teresa Anderson at Polsinelli, PC if they would like to volunteer to serve as a docket attorney and attend this free training. She can be reached at 816.753.1000 or via e-mail at [tanderson@polsinelli.com](mailto:tanderson@polsinelli.com). This docket attorney program will begin in January 2019, and we need a pool of committed volunteers in place before the December 12<sup>th</sup> training.

Of course, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have and, as always, thank you for helping us achieve our mission here at Family Court: ***Working With Families to Improve Our Future --- One Child at a Time.***

Sincerely,



J. Dale Youngs  
Administrative Judge  
Family Court Division

**16<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT COURT**  
**JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI**  
**Family and Juvenile Court**



*Working with Families  
To Improve Our Future,  
One Child at a Time*

The Family Court Attorney Workgroup  
And Casey Family Programs Present:

***Protective Custody Hearings 101***

(For Volunteers Who Represent Parents)

2 p.m.—5 p.m., Wednesday, December 12, 2018

The Law Offices of Polsinelli PC  
900 W. 48<sup>th</sup> Place, Suite 900, KC, MO

3 Hours Missouri CLE Credit, including 1 Ethics Hour

**ABOUT THE TRAINING COURSE**

**Protective Custody Hearings 101** is a training course for attorneys licensed in Missouri whose office or residence is in Jackson County who have volunteered to cover Protective Custody Hearings as counsel for the parents in Jackson County Family Court.

This **Free 3-Hour CLE** is one of the benefits of volunteering. The other benefits include the opportunity (1) to know when you sign up the dates of your court appearances, (2) to earn Pro Bono Hours, and (3) to be relieved of appointment in the Jackson County Family Court for the calendar year in which you volunteer.

Professional Liability Insurance is the responsibility of each volunteer.

**AGENDA**

- 1:30-2:00** Registration
- 2:00-2:10** Welcome and Introduction of the Pilot Project  
*Judge J. Dale Youngs, Family Court Administrative Judge*
- 2:10-2:30** The Basics (*Sophia Bond*)  
Who Are the Players?  
What Is the Meaning of the Alphabet Soup?  
What Is a Protective Custody Hearing?  
What Will the Court Decide?  
What Will the Court Ask the Parent?
- 2:30-3:20** Ethical Considerations: Competence, Diligence, Communication, Confidentiality, Conflicts, Limited Scope Representation, Advisor  
*(Commissioner Molly Merrigan and Dave Suroff)*
- 3:20-3:30** Break
- 3:30-4:30** Client Interview and Recommendations (*Dan Berezoski and Sandy Wirtel*)
- 4:30-4:50** Mock Protective Custody Hearing  
Participants: *Judge J. Dale Youngs; Commissioner Jackson; Assistant Director of Legal Services Elizabeth Walker; Children's Division Worker, Jackson County CASA Program Staff and Pro Bono Parents Attorneys Dan Berezoski and Sandy Wirtel*
- 4:50-5:00** Closing (*Lori Burns-Bucklew*)

**REGISTRATION**

To Register contact: Teresa Anderson, TAnderson@Polsinelli.com