



THE OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE



Tania M. Culley, Esquire
Child Advocate

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2003 (July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003)

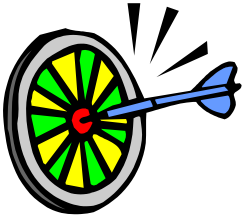


OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE

900 King Street • Suite 210 • Wilmington, Delaware 19801-3341 • Voice 302.577.6830 • Fax 302.577.6831
9 E. Loockerman Street • Suite 302 • Dover, DE 19901 • Voice 302.739.7150 • Fax 302.739.7153

<http://courts.state.de.us/childadvocate>

Mission



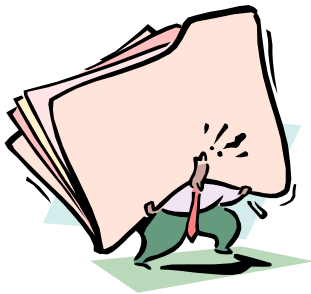
The Office of the Child Advocate shall safeguard the welfare of Delaware's children through educational advocacy, system reform, public awareness, training, and legal representation of children as set forth in 29 Del. C., Ch. 90A.

- * Ensure that every child's voice is heard in every court proceeding which affects their life.
- * Ensure that every player in the child protection system has the necessary education and training to put a child's safety and well-being above all else: children are not personal property ... they are human beings.
- * Ensure that Delaware's child welfare laws reflect the needs of our children and are a model for the nation.

Goals

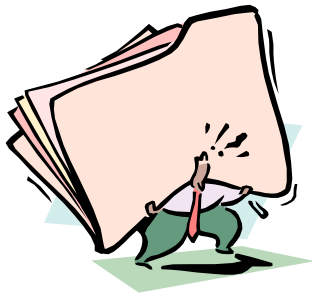


Duties



- * Take all possible actions, including programs of public education and legislative advocacy, to ensure the legal, civil and special rights of children;
- * Revise periodically all relevant policies and procedures with a view toward the rights of children;
- * Refer any person making a complaint or report required by Chapter 9 of Title 16 to the Division of Family Services, and, if warranted, to an appropriate police agency;
- * Recommend changes in the procedures for investigating and overseeing the welfare of children;
- * Make the public aware of the services of the Office of the Child Advocate and the Child Protection Accountability Commission, their purpose, and how they can be contacted;
- * Apply for and accept grants, gifts and bequests of funds from other state, federal and interstate agencies, as well as from private firms, individuals and foundations for the purpose of carrying out the Child Protection Accountability Commission's lawful responsibilities;
- * Examine policies and procedures and evaluate the effectiveness of the child protection system, specifically the respective roles of the Division of Family Services, the Attorney General's Office, the courts, the medical community and law enforcement agencies;

Duties (cont.)



- * Review and make recommendations concerning investigative procedures and emergency responses pursuant to this chapter;
- * Develop and provide quality training to Division staff, Deputy Attorneys General, law enforcement officers, the medical community, Family Court personnel, educators, day care providers, and others on the various standards, criteria and investigative technology used in these cases;
- * Submit an annual report analyzing the work of the Office of the Child Advocate that shall be included in the Child Protection Accountability Commission's annual report; and
- * Take whatever other actions are necessary to help the Child Protection Accountability Commission accomplish its goals.

New Castle County

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Locations

Kent/Sussex Counties

9 E. Loockerman Street
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Dover, DE 19901
Ph: (302) 739-7150
Fax: (302) 739-7153

FY03 Staff



Child Advocate
Deputy Child Advocates

Program Administrator
Office Manager
Family Crisis Therapists

Tania M. Culley, Esq.
Angela M. Fowler, Esq.
Mary Catherine (M.C.) Landis, Esq.
Anne Pedrick, MSCC
Wendy Gerlach
Celeste Bishop
Frances Pullella

Ashley Brown
Mary Deitch
Tony DiEgidio
Betsy Ferry
Kristen Gallas
Patrice Gonzalez

Holly Green
Kelley Johnston
Shirley Phillips
Rajat Rastogi
Carole Ricks
Carolina Robinson

Stacey Samborski
Jessica Schacter
Amy Smith
Amy Spence
Toby Thomas

FY03
Volunteers
Interns &
Law Clerks

Website: <http://courts.state.de.us/childadvocate>

FY 2003
Pro Bono Honor Roll

Derrick Abbott
Roger Akin
Debra Aldrich
Michael Allen
Susan Ament
Eileen Andersen
John Andrade
David Arndt
Michael Arrington
Daniel Astin
Gregory Babowal
Samantha Balick
Jennifer Barber
Joseph Barry
Sean Beach
Gerald Berkowitz
Robert Beste, III
Elizabeth Beyer
Shakuntla Bhaya
Michael Bonkowski
Mary Boudart
Curtis Bounds
A. Dale Bowers
John Brady
Jennifer Brierley
Steven Brinker
Paul Brown
H. Cabbage Brown
Gary Bryde
Warren Burt
Timothy Cairns
Peter Calder
Linda Carmichael
Denis Casey
Eileen Caulfield
Teresa Cheek
William Chipman
C. Malcolm Cochran, IV
P. Clarkson Collins
Christopher Componovo
John James Conly

Art Connolly, Jr.
Carolyn Conners
Alan Cooper
Noriss Cosgrove
Scott Cousins
Lydia Cox
Curtis Crowther
David Culley
Donna Culver
Edward Curley
Brock Czeschin
James Dalle Pазze
Bart Dalton
John Daniello
Carrie Dayton
Kim DeBonte
Christine Demsey
Jill DiSciullo
Melissa DiVincenzo
Shawn Dougherty
Paul Dougherty, III
James Drnec
Stephen Dryden
Kelly Dunn-Gelof
Edward (Mike) Eaton
Elisa Erlenbach
Elwood Eveland
Sherry Fallon
Dennis Ferri
Thomas Ferry
Yvette Fitzgerald
James Flynn
Tiffany Fonseca
Edward Fornias, III
James Freebery
Barbara Gadbois
David Gagne
Patricia Gallagher
Patricia Garthwaite
Frances Gauthier
Thomas Gay

Kathleen Geiger
Glynis Gibson
Paul Golian
William Gonser, Jr.
Lisa Goodman
Susan Gordon
Gerry Gray
Joseph Green
Kevin Gross
Jerome Grossman
Mark Gundersen
Kathleen Hadley
Raymond Hancock
Patricia Hannigan
Jeanne Hanson
Thomas Hanson
Jason Harbour
Jennifer Hartnett
Becky Hartshorn
Theresa Hayes
Julia Heaney
Catherine Hickey
Timothy Hitchings
Lorin Hochman
Thomas Hodukavich
Steven Holfeld
Vivian Houghton
Timothy Houseal
Janine Howard
Eric Howard
Amy Hudson
David Hutt
Frederick Iobst
Alfred Isaacs
Michael Isaacs
Kathleen Hostetter
Ann Marie Johnson
Judy Jones
Dawn Jones

FY 2003
Pro Bono Honor Roll (cont.)

Richard I. G. Jones, Jr.
Elizabeth Julian
Lucy Kendikian-Smith
Felice Kerr
Gretchen Knight
Laura Kominkiewicz
Laurie Krepto
Marie LaBruyere
Kathryn Laffey
Kimberly Lawson
Timothy Lengkeek
Norman Levine
Roger Levy
Elizabeth Lewis
Christal Lint
Andrew Lippstone
Susan List
Titania Mack
Elizabeth Marchioni
Thomas Marconi
Erin Mariani
The Hon. Jennifer Mayo
David McBride
Bernard McFadden
James McGiffin
Thomas McGonigle
Matthew McGuire
Mary Anne McLane
John McLaughlin, Jr.
Carolyn McNeice
Bruce McNew
Sherry McReynolds
Vivian Medinilla
Luke Mette
Ellen Meyer
Paulette Moore
Thomas Motter
Cathy Mulholland

Patricia Murphy
Francis Murphy
Frank Nardo
Jennifer Naylor
Michael Newell
Mary Ellen Noreika
Jennifer Gioia Nowak
Kevin O'Brien
Elizabeth Olsen
Darryl Parson
The Hon. Donald Parsons
Eliza Patten
Dennis Phifer
Lorraine Phillips
Tiffany Poole
Thomas Preston
Amy Quinlan
Vincent Ramunno, Jr.
B. Wilson Redfearn
Anne Reigle
Michael Reilly
Joseph Rhoades
Courtney Riordan
David Ripsom
Elizabeth Rodriguez
Helena Rychlicki
Anthony Saccullo
Tamara Sampson
Yvonne Saville
Michael Scali
Christine Schiltz
Todd Charles Schiltz
Pamela Scott
Suzanne Seubert
Thomas Shellenberger
Christopher Simon
Francine Solomon
Joanne Messick

Lisa Stark
Curtis Staropoli
Patrick Straub
William Sudell, Jr.
John Sullivan, Jr.
Carol Evon Taylor
James Taylor, Jr.
Michael Teichman
David Teklits
Harlan Tenenbaum
Allen Terrell
Anthony Testa, Jr.
John Thompson
Melanie Thompson
Patricia Uhlenbrock
Andrea Unterberger
Jan van Amerongen
Kathryn van Amerongen
Patrick Vanderslice
Karen Vicks
Michael Vild
Megan Ward
Nancy Waterman
Michael Weidinger
David Weidman
Gregory Williams
Evan Olin Williford
Julie Windhorn
Natalie Wolf
Etta Wolfe
Jim Woods
Christian Wright
Danielle Yearick
Laura Yiengst
Virginia Zrake
Lisa Zwally

FY 2003

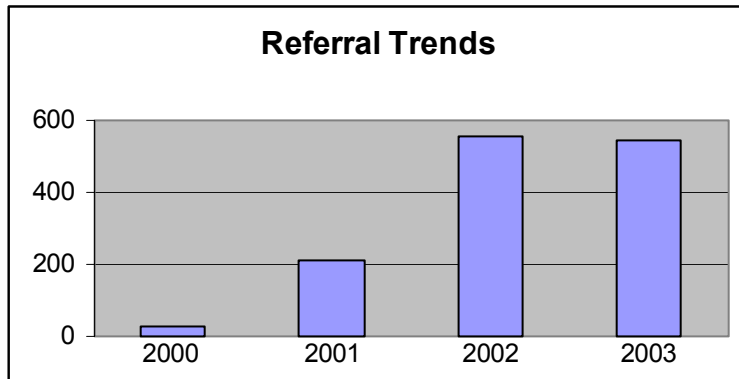
Law Firm Honor Roll

Akin & Herron
Ashby & Geddes
AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals
Barros, McNamara, Scanlon, Malkiewicz
& Taylor
Berkowitz, Schagrin, Cooper & Dryden
Bristol Myers Squibb
Brown, Shiels, Beauregard & Chasanov
Casarino, Christman & Shalk
City of Wilmington
Community Legal Aid Society
Connolly, Bove, Lodge & Hutz
Cooch & Taylor
Corporation Service Company
Dalton & Associates
Delaware Volunteer Legal Services
Doroshov, Pasquale, Krawitz, Siegel &
Bhaya
Duane Morris
E.I. Dupont De Nemours & Co
Ferrara, Haley, Bevis & Solomon
Fox Rothschild
Gibson & Nowak
Green, Green, Godowsky & McFadden
Greenberg Traurig
Nuclear Electric Insurance Ltd.
Oberly, Jennings & Rodunda
Hartnett & Hartnett
Hercules, Inc.
Herdeg, Dupont & Dalle Pазze
Holfeld & Becker
Houghton, Holly & Gray
Jacobs & Crumplar
Klett, Rooney, Lieber & Scherling
Law Office of Edward C. Gill
Law Office of Kathryn Laffey
Law Office of Joseph A. Wahl
Law Office of Joseph J. Rhoades
Law Office of Peter G. Angelos
Levine & Thompson

Liguori, Morris & Redding
Losco & Marconi
Maron & Marvel
Mattleman, Weinroth & Miller
MBNA America Bank
McCarter & English
McLane and Behl
Miller's Furniture Industries
Moore & Rutt
Morris, James, Hitchens & Williams
Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell
Murphy, Spadaro & Landon
Nixon Uniform Services
Stevens & Lee
Stumpf, Vickers & Sandy
Rahaim & Saints
Ramunno & Ramunno
Reed Smith
Richards, Layton & Finger
Roeberg, Moore & Associates
Rosenthal, Monhait, Gross & Goddess
Saul Ewing
Schmittinger & Rodriguez
Seitz, Van Ogorp & Green
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
The Bayard Firm
The Eveland Law Firm
Tunnell & Raysor
Tybout, Redfearn & Pell
U.S. Attorney's Office
Weik, Nitsche, Dougherty & Componovo
Weiss & Saville
White & Williams
Whitehurst & Curley
Wilson, Halbrook & Bayard
Wolf, Block, Schorr & Solis-Cohen
Woloshin, Tenenbaum, Lynch, Natalie &
Gagne
Young, Conaway, Stargatt & Taylor

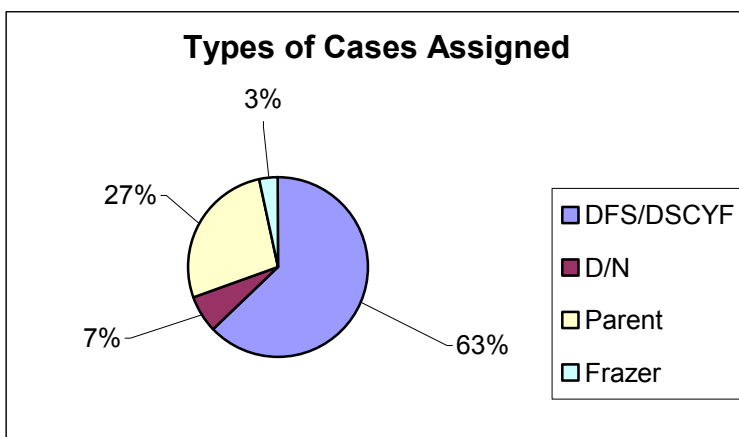
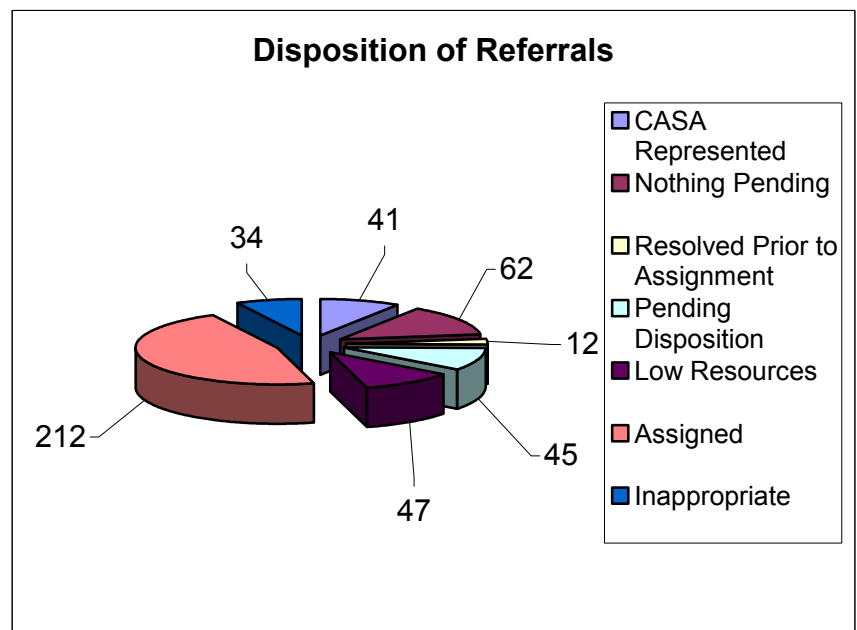
Where we are making a difference for Delaware's Children

Legal Representation of Children



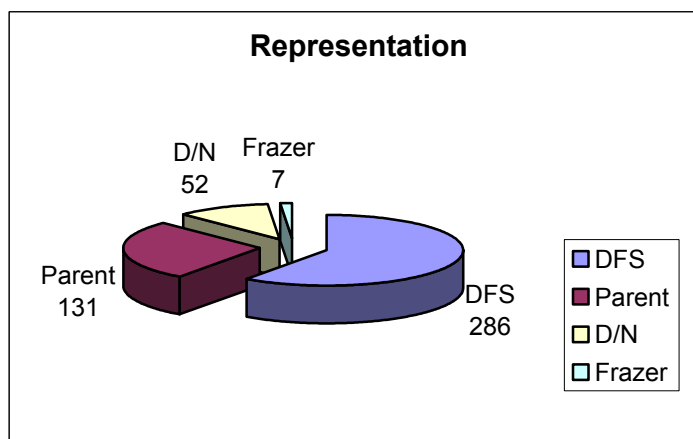
OCA still considers the legal representation of children to be its top priority. In Fiscal Year 2003, the Office of the Child Advocate received referrals on 547 children. This amount is a negligible decrease of 1% from fiscal year 2002 and a 120% increase from fiscal year 2001.

Of the 547 children, 513 cases were deemed appropriate for the Office in that the referrals related to the possible need for legal representation of a child in a civil Family Court matter. Of those 513 cases, attorneys were assigned to 212 children. This translates to 41% of our referrals receiving legal representation. With respect to the 301 children who did not receive legal representation through OCA, 47 of those cases were due to low resources. Most of the cases were closed due to resolution of the Court case. 41 cases were closed because CASA secured representation for the children. 45 cases were still pending review at the close of the fiscal year.

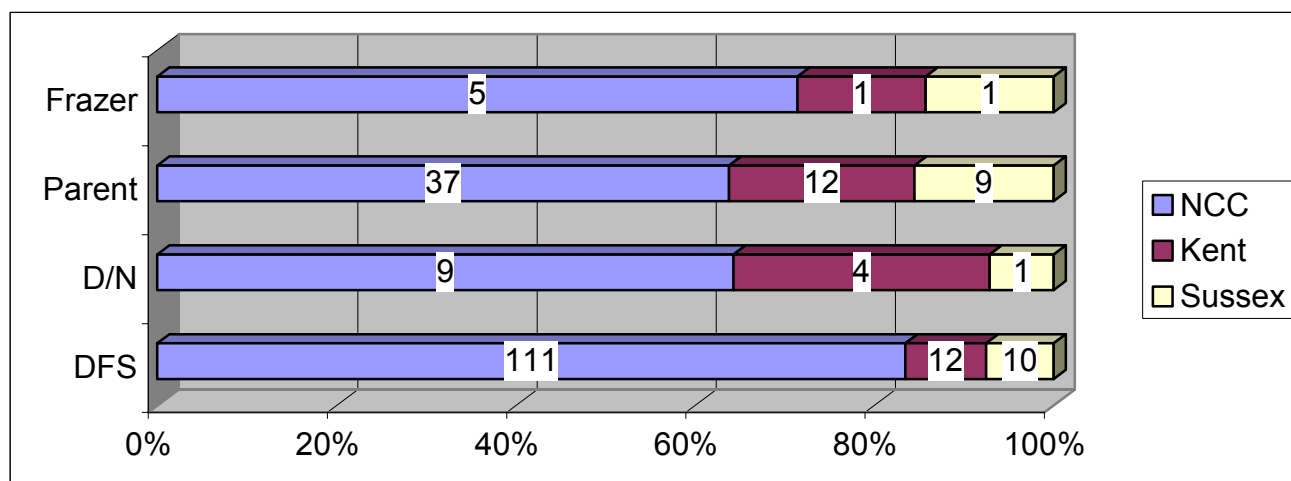


Of the 212 children who were assigned attorneys in FY03, 133 were children in the custody of the Children's Department (DFS), 14 were relative dependency/neglect cases (D/N), 58 were parent custody cases (Parent) and 7 were Frazer attorney appointments (Frazer).

In addition to the 212 children who were assigned attorneys in fiscal year 2003, 264 children from the prior fiscal years continued with active cases in 2003. **In short, 476 children received OCA legal representation throughout fiscal year 2003.** Of the 476, 286 of those children were in the custody of the Children's Department, 52 were relative dependency/ neglect cases, 131 were parent custody cases and 7 were Frazer attorney appointments. OCA will begin Fiscal Year 2004 with cases for 354 children still active. 263 of those children are in the custody of the Children's Department.



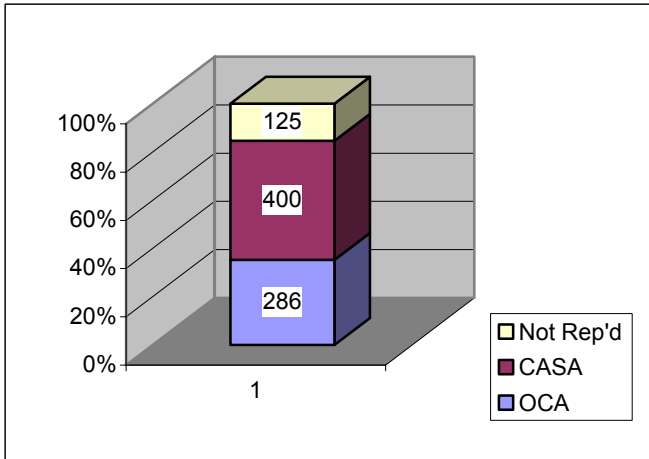
FY 2003 Assignments



With respect to the 212 new assignments in FY03, 162 of the children were from New Castle County, 29 were from Kent County, and 21 were from Sussex County. Out of the 162 New Castle County children, 111 of them were in the custody of the Children's Department, 9 of them were relative dependency/neglect cases, 37 were parent custody cases and 5 were Frazer attorney appointments. Out of the 29 Kent County children, 12 were in the custody of the Children's Department, 4 were relative dependency/neglect cases, 12 were parent

custody cases and 1 was a Frazer attorney appointment. In Sussex County, 10 children were in the custody of the Children's Department, 1 case was a relative dependency/neglect case, 9 were parent custody cases and 1 was a Frazer attorney appointment. As one can see from these numbers, the largest concentration of representation continues to be in New Castle County despite OCA efforts to increase representation in the lower two counties.

In Fiscal Year 2003, OCA closed cases for 122 children. Since the opening of the Office of the Child Advocate in February of 2000, 187 cases have been closed. Of the 122 children whose cases were closed in FY03, 56 were children in the custody of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families. Of those children, 31 were reunified with their parents, 10 turned 18 and aged out of the foster care system, 5 were adopted, 4 were placed in the custody of relatives and 6 were appointed guardians or permanent guardians.



OCA's primary focus has been on the federal and state requirements that every child in the custody of the Children's Department have a guardian ad litem representing their best interests in Family Court. 42 U.S.C.A. § 5106a(2)(B)(ii); 13 Del. C. § 701(c). As of June 30, 2003, there were nearly 800 children in foster care. OCA provided legal representation to 263 of those children. The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program represented approximately 400 children leaving about 130 children without guardian *ad litem* representation through CASA or OCA.

OCA takes great pride in the services our pro bono attorneys provide. Out of the 212 children who received legal representation in FY03, 184 of them were represented by pro bono attorneys. 153 of those children were represented by New Castle County attorneys, 15 by Kent County attorneys and 13 by Sussex County attorneys. As mentioned earlier, the 212 new cases are only 40% of

the children that received OCA legal representation during Fiscal Year 2003. As of June 30, 2003, 354 cases remained active with a total of 476 children having legal representation some-time during FY03. Of those 354 children, pro bono attorneys represented 236. OCA kept several cases in-house, representing 91 children throughout the year.

OCA expended 1,002 hours in providing pro bono support. OCA expended 3,462 hours providing direct client services. This time does not include the countless hours which were donated by social work and law clerk interns during FY03.

Legislative
Advocacy

Fiscal Year 2003 was a quiet year for legislation for the Office of the Child Advocate. 179 hours were contributed to reviewing legislation, working on legislative proposals, providing recommendations for amendments to proposed legislation, and monitoring and assisting in the implementation of legislation passed by the 141st General Assembly.

Training And Education

Pursuant to 29 Del. C. §9005A(9), OCA is mandated to provide and participate in training of the child welfare community. In furtherance of our mandate, OCA has spent 288 hours participating in and/or conducting the following training and/or educational forums:

8/2/02 – Pro Bono Training – OCA
8/8/02 – OCA Overview -- Bayard House
8/9/02 – Pro Bono Training – OCA
9/26/02 – History Training – Division of Family Services
10/2/02 – Pro Bono Training – OCA
11/1/02 – ICPC Training – Family Court
11/13/02 -11/14/02 – Domestic Violence Training
12/11/02 – Foster Care Reform Forum Retreat
1/23/03 – Child Protection Registry Training – Division of Family Services
2/5/03 – Pro Bono Training – OCA – Morris Nichols Arsht & Tunnell
3/7/03 – Pro Bono Training – OCA – Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor
3/13/03 – ASFA Training – Family Court
3/14/03 – Pro Bono Training – OCA – Morris Nichols Arsht & Tunnell
3/14/03 – Relationship Strategies – Administrative Office of the Courts
3/28/03 – Pro Bono Training – OCA – Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor
3/7/03 – Pro Bono Training – OCA – Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor
4/15/03 – 4/16/03 – AIC Training Consortium 1st Annual Conference – See Below
4/30/03 – Power of Leadership Conference – University of Delaware
5/8/03 – Partners for Independence Summit – Independent Living Advisory Board – See Below
5/8/03 – ASFA Training – Family Court
6/5/03 – DSBA Bench and Bar Conference
6/20/03 – Pro Bono Training – OCA – The Law Office of Henry Clay Davis III

Here are some further highlights of these activities--

Abuse Intervention Committee Training Consortium

This committee, on which OCA serves, created a training consortium for child welfare. The purpose of the consortium is to coordinate all child welfare training as well as sponsor an annual conference. Prevent Child Abuse Delaware hired the training coordinator in the Fall of 2002. The training coordinator as well as members of law enforcement, Family Court, the Department of Justice, the Office of the Child Advocate, the Children's Department and several non-profit agencies, planned the Consortium's first annual conference. The conference, primarily funded by the Children's Advocacy Center, was held in Dover on April 15 and 16, 2003. The conference was entitled "Putting the Pieces Together: Working Together for Delaware's Children" and focused on multi-disciplinary collaboration. The American Prosecutors Research Institute and local participants presented, discussing the roles of many players in Delaware's child welfare system. Governor Ruth Ann Minner, Secretary Cari DeSantis and Attorney General M. Jane Brady spoke. The Consortium hopes to continue its work in FY2004 with a conference in the Spring of 2004.

Partners for Independence Summit

During the Fiscal Year 2003, M.C. Landis continued in her role as Chair of the Independent Living Advisory Board. A major initiative of that Board, along with the newly formed Independent Living Summit Committee and the Children's Department, culminated in the first Partners for Independence Summit held on May 8, 2003 at Delaware Technical and Community College in Dover. This first convening of its kind in this State was designed to heighten public awareness of the difficulties facing youth as they exit foster care at age 18. Representatives of the public and private sectors attended, as did about 20 youth in foster care. The highlight of the day was a panel of current and former foster youth who spoke eloquently about their needs as they face the challenge of adulthood without family support. The momentum generated by this Summit will be carried forward by committees in an effort to address the needs the youth have identified as crucial to their success: employment, job training, housing and mentorship.

Pro Bono Trainings and Recruitment

OCA continued its full-day training of pro bono attorneys on 8/2/02, 8/9/02, and 10/2/02. As a result of those trainings, 80 attorneys were trained to represent children. In response to requests from law firms and members of the legal community, OCA began taking the training "in-house" to law firms in February of 2003. OCA chose to eliminate the videotape of the 2000 OCA conference and simply provide the "nuts and bolts" of representing a child. The training lasts from 1.5 to 2 hours and is packed full of information. Trainings have been held at Young, Conaway, Stargatt & Taylor, Richards, Layton & Finger, and Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell. A total of 4 in-house trainings were done in fiscal year 2003 with the anticipation of several more in 2004. 40 attorneys were trained as a result.

OCA has worked closely with Delaware Volunteer Legal Services over the last year to improve coordination and recognition of pro bono services. OCA and DVLS both participate in the Low Income Persons Committee of the Delaware State Bar Association. This committee, led by Mary MaloneyHuss, Esquire, focuses on the legal needs of indigent persons in Delaware. The Delaware Supreme Court has been an avid supporter of pro bono service by the Delaware Bar and has worked closely with the Committee, DVLS and OCA to recognize this important service. Beginning in January of 2003, the Supreme Court sends appreciation letters to each member of the bar who takes his or her first pro bono case. The Delaware State Bar Association has agreed to encompass the yearly pro bono awards as part of its awards. DVLS recognizes the pro bono service of all attorneys, including those who volunteer through OCA, in the IN RE: publication and in its annual report. The Law Firm of Henry Clay Davis, III, sponsored a free CLE and happy hour to assist DVLS and OCA in recruiting Sussex County attorneys. All in all, the teamwork and support OCA has received from various arms of the Bar has been nothing short of outstanding. OCA looks forward to continued heightened recognition of pro bono service in FY04, and to further participation by members of the Delaware Bar.

Community Outreach and Publicity

In fiscal year 2003, OCA spent 90 hours increasing public awareness of the Office of the Child Advocate.

Website

In September of 2003, OCA was proud to launch its website – <http://courts.de.us/childadvocate>. OCA is indebted to the incredible talent of Amy Whitman at the Judicial Information Center for the website's design. Amy's creativity has enabled users to quickly understand the Office of the Child Advocate and its services, as well as send a message that OCA is all about kids. While OCA does not have the statistics for the number of referrals from the website, it has been a tremendous asset to OCA. The website covers information on how to make a referral to OCA and how those referrals are processed, who the OCA staff are, significant court cases or legislation affecting children, information on the Child Protection Accountability Commission, and spotlights on pro bono attorneys, foster parents and child welfare workers.

Dover Office

In July of 2002, OCA finally opened its Dover office in Treadway Towers. Staffed by Angela Fowler, Esquire, Deputy Child Advocate, and Celeste Bishop, Family Crisis Therapist, the Office serves as home to OCA staff and access for our Kent and Sussex County cases. However, all referrals and appointment decisions are still made in the Wilmington office.

Publicity and Media

Throughout fiscal year 2003, OCA was repeatedly called upon to comment on newsworthy issues involving children. OCA has regular contact with The News Journal and WILM radio, and has also had contact with Delaware State News and WHY TV.

Grants And Bequests

The Office of the Child Advocate has a legal mandate to “apply for and accept grants, gifts, and bequests of funds from other states, federal, and inter-state agencies, as well as from private firms, individuals, and foundations, for the purpose of carrying out the Commission’s lawful responsibilities”. 29 Del. C. § 9005A(6). In 2002, OCA was awarded the Children’s Justice Act grant to fund a part-time Family Crisis Therapist for Kent/Sussex counties. Celeste Bishop continues in that position and the grant. She spends most of her time doing casework, supporting the Deputy Child Advocate in her cases, and providing pro bono support to our volunteer attorneys in Kent/Sussex counties. Her position is crucial to the Deputy Child Advocate since there is no support staff in Kent/Sussex counties.

In January 2003, the Office of the Child Advocate applied for a mini-grant through the American Bar Association Child Custody Pro Bono Project. The focus of this grant was for \$6,000 to conduct a statewide Child Advocacy training for current pro bono attorneys and newly recruited attorneys. Unfortunately, OCA did not receive this grant because the ABA Child Custody Pro Bono Project decided to focus on areas other than training. However, in recognition of OCA’s excellent pro bono program, Anne Pedrick, Program Administrator was asked to join Barbara Chasnoff from the ABA Pro Bono Project for a presentation at the AFCC Midwest Regional Conference, November 13-15, 2003 in St. Louis, Missouri.

DFS Policy And Procedure/Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

OCA is mandated, pursuant to 29 Del. C. § 9005A(2), to periodically review and revise all relevant child welfare policies and procedures with a view toward expanding the rights of children. The Office of the Child Advocate is also to recommend changes in procedures for investigating and overseeing the welfare of our children. 29 Del. C. § 9005A(4). In fiscal year 2003, OCA spent 820 hours on these issues, primarily focusing on reviews of child deaths.

Partnership Meetings: DFS and OCA continue to meet quarterly to discuss issues concerning policy, collaboration, procedures, case concerns, and partnerships on legislation. The meetings continue to facilitate communication between the agencies and to build partnerships on child welfare issues. They also serve as a stepping-stone for resolution of differences regarding cases and policy. OCA participates in the quarterly Court Improvement Project meetings held by the New Castle and Sussex County Family Courts.

Root Cause Analysis: Throughout FY03, OCA has participated in numerous Root Cause Analyses within the Children's Department. Each root cause analysis requires 50-80 hours of time. The focus of an RCA is on system failure and best practices not individual performance. The goal is to provide constructive recommendations for improvement. OCA's involvement in these reviews have provided outside perspectives and ideas for system improvement, and has enabled OCA to advocate for system change and multi-disciplinary collaboration in the child welfare community and the legislature.

Child Death Reviews: In addition to the internal reviews conducted by the Department, in FY02, OCA lobbied for expedited reviews of child deaths by the Child Death Review Commission. In FY03, several expedited reviews took place. The public recommendations from those reviews are as follows: OCA also worked collaboratively with its partners to develop policies and procedures for the Child Death Review Commission, and to begin compilation of the 2000-2002 CDRC Annual Reports.

Participation: The Office of the Child Advocate was also involved in the following task forces, commissions and committees and belonged to the following organizations in FY03. In addition, OCA serves on countless subcommittees within these groups:

Abuse Intervention Committee
AIC Training Consortium
ABA Center on Children & the Law
Child Death Review Commission
Child Protection Accountability Commission
Children's Advocacy Center Board
Children and Domestic Violence Workgroup
Delaware Partnership for Positive Youth Development
DSBA Executive Committee
DSBA Family Law Section
DSBA LIP Committee
DSBA Women and the Law Section

DFS Advisory Council
Domestic Violence Task Force
Grassroots Citizens for Children
Independent Living Advisory Board
Interagency Council on Adoption
Melson Arshat Inn of Court
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
Terry Carey Inn of Court



Office of the Child Advocate

Wilmington Office

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