



Children's Participation in Justice Processes: *Finding the Best Ways Forward*

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Symposium

The Finding the Best Ways Forward is a national symposium gathering together a broad, multidisciplinary spectrum of leading stakeholders to share information and dialogue about how children's voices are heard, how their interests are protected and how their evidence is received in justice processes. The symposium will generate innovative proposals for policy reform, best practices and recommendations for future research about children's participation in justice processes, and will be held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Calgary, Alberta on **15 and 16 September 2017**.

The symposium is open to anyone with an interest in children's participation in justice processes. We invite the participation of: judges, lawyers and articulated students; academics, researchers, graduate students and post-doctoral students; social workers, clinical psychologists, counsellors and other mental health professionals; and, government decision-makers, policy-makers and administrators.

The symposium is organized by the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family and the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta. Funding for the symposium has been generously provided by the Alberta Law Foundation.

Submissions

Presenters should be prepared to facilitate a 90-minute workshop, provide background materials for your workshop, which may include works of original scholarship, and produce a summary of the workshop's outcomes.

We invite submission of proposals for workshops on the following guidelines:

- summary of your workshop topic, format and estimated time;
- statement of your audiovisual requirements;

- statement of the learning objectives and anticipated outcomes of your workshop;
- list of any co-presenters who have confirmed their participation;
- the current curricula vitae of all presenters;
- your agreement to participate as a panelist in other workshops, if required; and,
- your agreement to produce the following by **2 June 2017**
 - a two-paragraph summary of your workshop topic,
 - a short, one-paragraph bio of each presenter, suitable for use in promotional activities, and
 - a summary of the anticipated outcomes from your workshop, described below.

You must also agree to provide, and consent to publish, a written summary of the actual outcomes of your workshop by no later than **13 October 2017**.

Submissions may be sent by email and must be received by **7 April 2017**.

Outcomes

This symposium is intended to be results-driven and generate practical and innovative proposals for policy reform, best practices, and recommendations for future research about children's participation in justice processes. Each workshop must be designed to produce an outcome of some sort, which may include:

- the collective conclusions and recommendations emerging from your workshop;
- your group's observations and opinions on the subject matter of your workshop;
- suggestions for policy and policy reform;
- proposals for guidelines, protocols and best practices; and,
- suggested areas for further research and enquiry.

Workshop outcomes will be published as a record of the proceedings of the symposium.

Topics

Proposals are welcome on any subject related to children's participation in justice processes. Potential topics may include, but are not limited to, the following.

1. Best practices:
 - the role of children's counsel;
 - best practices for children's legal clinics;
 - best practices for representing children;
 - best practices for judicial child interviews;
 - best practices for child interviews by lawyers and mental health professionals;
 - establishing and operating children's legal clinics; and,
 - promoting legislative and regulatory change.
2. Child participation:
 - the child in family law proceedings, child protection proceedings and youth criminal justice proceedings;
 - determining children's competence and capacity to instruct counsel;

- the child in parenting coordination processes;
- roles for the child in mediation and collaborative law processes;
- children's testimony, affidavits and letters in court processes; and,
- adapting court processes to accommodate children's participation.

3. Child interviews and assessments:

- evaluative and non-evaluative views of the child reports;
- confidentiality of professionals' communications with children;
- child interviewers on the stand;
- the role of early assessments and parenting assessments in family law and child protection proceedings;
- training child interviewers; and,
- establishing child interviewer rosters.

4. Children's rights:

- children and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- children and Canadian human rights legislation; and,
- the practical and legal effect of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child within Canada.

Contact

Please send your workshop proposal to John-Paul Boyd, Executive Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, by **7 April 2017** at:

Email

jpboyd@ucalgary.ca

Post

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Visit www.findingthebestwaysforward.com for more information about the symposium or contact Mr. Boyd by email or by telephone at +1-403-216-0341.