

Lecturers

Bios & Presentations Descriptions

Cynthia Osborne, Ph.D.—Associate Professor at LBJ School of Public Affairs,
am Lecture University of Texas at Austin

Cynthia Osborne is an Associate Professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin an affiliate of the UT Austin Population Research Center. Her teaching and research interests are in the areas of social policy, poverty and inequality, family and child well-being, family demography, and school entry among disadvantaged children. Dr. Osborne is also the state-wide evaluator of the Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.) curriculum, which is a mandatory high school based curriculum that teaches adolescents about the rights, responsibilities, and realities of being a parent. Prior to joining the LBJ School faculty, Osborne was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Center for Research on Child Wellbeing at Princeton University, where she worked on the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Survey of New Parents. She holds a Ph.D. in demography and public affairs from Princeton University, a master's in public policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and a master of arts in education from Claremont Graduate University. Previously, Osborne was a middle school teacher in a low-income community in California.

Subject matter:

Dr. Osborne's presentation will highlight the increasing complexity and instability of today's families and the implications these changes have for children, parents, providers, policy makers, lawmakers and courts. In particular, Osborne will discuss the complex roles that fathers play in today's families and the support fathers need from practitioners, policy makers, and courts to ensure that they play a responsible and engaged role in their children's lives.

James W. Payne— Judge & Director of Indiana Department of Child Services

pm Lecture (Submitted for 1 hour CLE)

A graduate of DePauw University and the Indiana University Law School, James Payne is currently the Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services. He was appointed by Governor Mitch Daniels in 2004 to head up the newly created Department of Child Services. DCS is an agency with 3,000 employees responsible for child protection services and child support. DCS is receiving national recognition for its efforts to improve child protection in Indiana and its CFSR results demonstrate that. Prior to being appointed by Governor Daniels he served the last 20 years as the Juvenile Court Judge in Marion County, Indiana. During that tenure he was responsible for the development of case management software for juvenile justice and many statewide and national award winning programs.

Judge Payne speaks frequently around the country on issues of delinquency, abuse and neglect, case management and juvenile justice practice and policy. He has served on many Boards and Executive Committees developing Juvenile Court policy both in Indiana and throughout the Country. Judge Payne was featured in a Dateline NBC and MSNBC special "For Their Own Good", a documentary addressing child abuse and neglect cases in the Marion County Juvenile Court. This involved allowing cameras to record the hearings and events of abuse and neglect cases and explaining to the public the efforts provided by Courts and the system to protect children, preserve families and provide permanency.

A member of many associations including the Child Welfare League of America, American Public Human Services Association and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Judge Payne has also received numerous awards including the Distinguished Hoosier Award from the Indiana Governor's Office and the Juvenile Court Judge of the Year award for the State of Indiana.

He has served as a Council Member of the NIAAA, National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. He has also served on an advisory committee for the Federal Government to review the Children and Family Services Review, CFSR. CFSR is the major initiative to improve the child welfare system in each state and to measure that improvement in tangible and measurable outcomes. CFSR is the single most important initiative driving the system to improve itself. Indiana will be a leader in its outcome improvements.

Judge Payne is married to Terrie, his wife of 42 years. They have two children and five grandchildren.

Subject matter:

The Economy and Child Welfare: Judges, Agencies and the Legal Community Understanding the Reality

Workshop Speakers

Bios & Presentations Descriptions

Texas Office of the Attorney General

Michael Hayes— Deputy for Family Initiatives

Michael Hayes is the Deputy for Family Initiatives in the Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG). He has extensive experience in the development of policy, partnerships, and projects that support family stability, paternity establishment, father involvement, and child support program improvement. He has led the implementation of numerous child support demonstration projects and helped establish statewide initiatives educating teens about parental responsibility, providing legal services to parents with visitation and custody issues, and directing unemployed non-custodial parents to workforce services.

Immediately prior to his work with the OAG, Michael helped create and was director of the Texas Fragile Families Initiative (TFF), a state-wide initiative bringing together more than 30 private foundations, multiple state agencies and community/faith-based organizations in 12 sites across Texas to support fragile families.

Workshop Description: (submitted for 1.5 hours CLE—am & pm)

"Navigating Complicated Relationships for Families: Paternity, Child Support, and Shared Parenting" This workshop will provide a practical approach for working in partnership with the Office of the Attorney General-Child Support Division (OAG-CSD) to help fathers navigate the often confusing and overwhelming path from paternity establishment to financial support to co-parenting - all with the goal of promoting child well-being.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Kenneth Thompson— Fatherhood program Specialist—CPS State Office

Ellen Letts— Family Group Decision Making Program Specialist—CPS State Office

Kenneth Thompson

Kenneth D. Thompson Sr. brings a talent for children and father's advocacy cultivated in the private sector for the past five years as a parent educator, facilitator, mentor and talk show host. Kenneth's experience as lead host for "The Dad-Show" and the featured facilitator for "Focus on Fathers" serves him well in his current assignment as the first ever Fatherhood Program Specialist for DFPS in the Family Focus Division.

Kenneth served as Director of "All American Mentoring Project", a mentoring program with an emphasis on children from single parent homes and low social economic status. He is the former President of the Board of Trustees for the Pflugerville Independent School District, where he was the first African American elected to political office in the Pflugerville community. Kenneth is also the former Vice President of Texas Caucus of Black School Board Members. Kenneth served as the Vice-Chair for the Austin Advisory Committee addressing disproportionality with in the Welfare System.

Kenneth currently serves as the Director of the East Austin Youth Foundation which serves approximately 200 youth providing sports activities while promoting high academic achievement. Kenneth also serves on the Board of, "ANewEntry LLC" a program charged with providing counseling and transitional housing to formerly

incarcerated men. Additionally, he serves on the Board of Directors for The Overton Group, which focuses on multi-lingual education in Head Start.

Lastly, Kenneth was appointed to the National Advisory Board by the Quality Improvement Center on Non Resident Fathers in the Child Welfare System. Kenneth is a graduate of Southwest Institute of Technology.

Ellen Letts

Since 1995, Mrs. Letts has dedicated her career to social work. While seeking her social work degree, Mrs. Letts was employed at a residential rehabilitation facility working with older adults and youth suffering from chronic head injuries and in need of mental health services. Upon obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work from the University of Texas at Austin, Mrs. Letts began a career with the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services, Child Protective Services (CPS). For the last 11 years, she has dedicated her career to protecting children from abuse & neglect. Her varied experience with CPS as an Investigator, Family Based Safety Services caseworker & supervisor, Family Conference Specialist, and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Program Director, has provided Mrs. Letts the knowledge, skills, and abilities to continue her success with CPS as the FGDM Program Specialist for State Office. As the FGDM Program Specialist, Mrs. Letts leads the state of Texas in its charge to fully integrate the FGDM process within all levels of the organization & casework practice.

Workshop Description (am & pm)

“For too long, the child welfare system has focused on the mother to the exclusion of fathers, and fathers have been too willing to be excluded.” This presentation will focus on practices and the value of engaging fathers in the child welfare system. One of the biggest opportunities we have to preserve and reunify families is to include fathers in the case planning process. Fathers have been too willing not to be engaged and unwilling to offer resistance to the system. This workshop will help caseworkers and other professionals identify concrete methods to approach, engage, and work with the fathers, as well as discuss the value fathers have on healthy relationships within the family.

Administration for Children and Families, Region VI

Elma Goodwin— AAHMI, Fatherhood and Positive Youth Development (PYD) Initiatives

Larry McDowell— Family Life and Marriage Program Specialist

Elma Goodwin

Elma Goodwin is on staff in the Office of the Regional Administrator and serves as the lead for the for Region VI which covers Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Texas. The region provides guidance and technical assistance for cross-cutting programs such as Healthy Marriage, Fatherhood, PYD, Homelessness, Disaster Recovery and Emergency Preparedness. Prior to her current assignment, she served in several leadership positions in the private sector.

She has a Master of Arts degree in Organizational Management from Dallas Baptist University. She is married and the mother of a son and daughter.

Larry McDowell

Larry is the Family Life and Marriage Program Specialist with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)/U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Region VI Office in Dallas, Texas. He began his current role in September 2003 and since that time he has been providing information, technical assistance and training related to ACF’s Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives. He routinely makes contact and provides information through personal visits and workshops to governmental, community-based and faith-based organizations in the 5 State ACF Region that includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico and

Texas. He has assisted in the formation of numerous community healthy marriage coalitions and has provided oversight and technical assistance to the many ACF Healthy Marriage grantees in the Region. Mr. McDowell came to the ACF Regional Office from Colorado where he spent 25 years administering human services and workforce development programs at the county government level and provided research and consultation services to the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Department of Labor related to family strengthening and the involvement of faith-based organizations in service delivery.

Mr. McDowell has been married 20 years and is the father of two daughters.

Workshop Description (am & pm)

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families' Responsible Fatherhood Initiative: Past, Present and Future.

This workshop will review select federally-funded Responsible Fatherhood projects to provide lessons learned from programs designed to promote on-going, sustainable father involvement, healthy marriage, responsible parenting, and economic stability. In addition, an update of the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative will be provided.

Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers

Karen Jenkins—American Humane Association, Director of Public Child Welfare Initiatives

Howard Davidson, J.D.—American Bar Association, Director of Center on Children and the Law

Karen Jenkins

Howard Davidson

Director, Center on Children and the Law of the American Bar Association, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Davidson has served as chair of the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect and has written extensively on improving laws and judicial processes related to the protection of children.

Workshop Description (am & pm / submitted for 1.5 hours CLE—Morning only)

Because very little meaningful engagement occurs between the child welfare system and fathers, the QIC-NRF was funded by the Children's Bureau and established by American Humane Association, American Bar Association-Center on Children and the Law, and National Fatherhood Initiative. This workshop will show how the project is building on HHS/ACF-funded research to provide an evidence-based approach for engaging fathers in the child welfare system with *specific emphasis will be on overcoming legal barriers to non-resident/custodial fathers and paternal kin engagement.*

J. Michael Hall—Strong Fathers-Strong Families

Founder / President

J Michael Hall, M.Ed. -Founder and President, Strong Fathers-Strong Families is the father of two boys (8th grade and 12th grade) and the husband to a beautiful elementary reading teacher. Mr. Hall has been a special education teacher, a teacher of the gifted and talented, and an intermediate and middle school principal. As an educator, speaker and founder of Strong Fathers-Strong Families, he has presented to more than 60,000 fathers and parents at local schools, Head Starts, and regional and national conferences.

He is presently the host of Strong Father Radio on the Bam Internet Radio Network and has written magazine articles for the National PTA, The Southwestern Educational Development Laboratory, and The National Head Start Association's Children and Family Magazine. He is also a contributing author to a book on fathering entitled Why Fathers Count, and is considered one of the country's foremost experts on working with fathers in schools and Head Starts and is presently a provider of Father Involvement training for National Head Start Association training conferences.

Mike has presented his well received workshops in New York, Anaheim, Pasadena, Boston, New Orleans, San Antonio, Rapid City, San Jose, Dallas, Indianapolis, Nashville, Oklahoma City, Austin, Houston and many small towns in between.

Fathers Panel Description: (This will be a general assembly during the lunch hour)

Mr. Hall will facilitate a question and answer discussion with non-resident fathers who have/had children in the child-welfare system. What were their initial perceptions of working with child welfare? What were their struggles and successes in understanding the system, working with caseworkers, and visiting their children? What is their parenting status as a result of becoming engaged in the system? Why did they participate in voluntary educational classes over and above those mandated by their service plans? What should every professional know about engaging non-resident fathers?