

FRACTURED FAMILIES



The Causes and Consequences of
Children Separated from their Families
Across International Borders

AGENDA

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 4TH

- 7:45 - 8:30 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:30 - 8:45 a.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks: Dean Barth
- 8:45 - 9:00 a.m. Keynote introduction
- 9:00 - 9:45 a.m. Keynote Ambassador Susan Jacobs
- 9:45 - 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:00 - Noon
- Session 1: International Abduction and Mediation: Abandoned Dreams (2 CEUs)**
This session will focus on the problems faced by families and children when a parent removes a child from her country of habitual residence in violation of the other parent's rights. Despite international conventions that were written to deal with this ever-growing problem there are limits to the legal remedies available to the parent left behind. What other options are available to assist parents in: 1) regaining legal custody, 2) establishing important connections to the child and/or 3) developing a regular visitation schedule. One option is mediation. Mediation is successfully used in these disputes to resolve them amicably and in the best interest of the child (ren) involved. The panel will suggest other possible options for resolution as well.
- Confirmed Presenters:**
Jeff Greif- University of Maryland School of Social Work
Gabrielle Scholz-ISS Germany
Jana Singer-University of Maryland School of Law
Stephen Cullen-Miles and Stockbridge
- Noon - 1:00 p.m. Lunch (*provided for registrants*)
- 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
- Session 2: Disrupted International Adoption: Broken Families (2 CEUs)**
Thousands of children are adopted into, and out of, the United States every year. International adoption is often a long, complex and difficult process. There a myriad of adjustment issues, that must be addressed by both the child and the parents once the child(ren) arrives. There seem to be too few resources to assist the new family in managing these problems. The focus of this session is what happens when an international adoption disrupts. What are the child's rights, and what is in her best interest? What are the parents' responsibilities? What role should publically funded local, state or federal agencies play? Should the adoption agency be held accountable for serious problems that lead to a disruption?

Confirmed Presenters:

Kathleen Strottman-Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (*Moderator*)

Miki Stebbing- DOS OCS CS

Kate Cleary- Consortium for Children

Howard Altstein-University of Maryland School of Social Work

Debbie Riley-Center for Adoption Support and Education

3:00 - 3:15 p.m.

Break

3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Session 3: Immigration and Immigration Enforcement: Shattered Connections (2 CEUs)

This session will examine the increasingly common problem of children being separated from their parents because of immigration. Topics to be addressed include parents emigrating and leaving minor children behind, immigration enforcement activities that may require a parent or parents to be repatriated, and the emigration of children into, and repatriation of children out of the United States. What are the parent's rights in these cases? What role should the child play in determining what is in his best interest?

Confirmed Presenters:

Michelle Brane Women's Refugee Commission

Elizabeth Alex Casa de Maryland

Dana Chou LIRS

Enid Gonzalez CASA de Maryland

USCCB Representative

5:15 - 5:30 p.m.

Question and Answer Period: to cover the entire first day. We will allow for a short q and a period in each session.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5TH

8:15 - 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast

9:00 - Noon

Session 4: Consequences: What More Can be Done to Protect Children's Best Interests? (3 CEUs)

The second day will focus exclusively on the consequences of the millions of children around the world who have been separated from their families. Panelists will address questions such as: What can we, as social service and legal professionals and child advocates, do to prevent the fracturing of families? How can we best protect children who are entering and leaving our borders without parental guardianship? Are there domestic best practices that can be replicated in cases where the child has to cross international borders? Are there best practices in other countries that can be used as a template for improving the protection of children entering or leaving the United States? What are the next best steps in addressing the problems detailed in the three sessions on Day One?

Confirmed Presenters:

Howard Davidson-American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law
Stephen Cullen Miles and Stockbridge (*Moderator*)

Allison Blake-Commissioner, New Jersey DCF

Herve Boechat-ISS GS

Jean Geran-Legatum Institute

10:30 - 10:45 a.m.

Break

Noon - 12:30 p.m.

Final thoughts/Closing Comments