



# New York State Family Defense Conference 2025

**APRIL 24-25, 2025**

Empire State Plaza Concourse  
100 South Mall Arterial  
Albany, NY 12242

## 10.5 MCLE Credits

10.5 Credits in Areas of Professional Practice  
CEU credits pending

This program is transitional and is suitable for all attorneys including those newly admitted.  
This program is open to all Family Defense team members.

New York State Bar Association

**Registration  
now open!**



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## Thursday April 24, 2025

- 11:45 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. **Sign In & Registration**
- 12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Welcome & Introduction**  
Domenick Napoletano, President, New York State Bar Association  
Hon. Rowan D. Wilson, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals
- 1:30 p.m. – 1:40 p.m. **Break**
- 1:40 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Plenary One – Family Law Update - Appellate Decisions January 2024 to April 2025**  
Faculty:  
Adele Fine, Attorney at Law  
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- 3:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m. **Break**
- 3:10 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. **Breakouts**  
**Family Policing Abolition Movement Update: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Path Forward**  
Faculty:  
Angela Burton, Founder, Repeal CAPTA Workgroup  
Dawn Westfall, LMSW, Cattaraugus County Public Defender's Office  
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**Representing Non-Citizen Clients in Family Court: Cultural Sensitivity & Your Ethical Obligations**  
Faculty:  
Daniel E. Jackson, Deputy Director of RIAC, Region 2  
Shana Pughe Dean, Associate Director of Social Enterprise, The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees  
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## Friday, April 25, 2025

- 8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. **Sign In & Registration**
- 8:30 a.m. – 9:50 p.m. **Keynote Introduction:**  
Joyce McMillan, Founder and Executive Director of Just Making a Change for Families (JMACforFamilies)  
Faculty:  
Professor Dorothy Roberts, 2024 MacArthur Fellow  
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- 9:50 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Break**
- 10:00 a.m. – 11:20 a.m. **Breakouts**  
**The Power of Narrative: Storytelling as Advocacy in Trial and Appellate Practice**  
Faculty:  
Kate F. Woods, Attorney at Law  
Cynthia Feathers, Attorney at Law  
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**Family Court Counsel's Responsibilities Regarding Appeals: Preserve, Protect, Pause**  
Faculty:  
Carolyn Walther, Appellate Counsel, Parent Representation, ILS Statewide Appellate Support Center  
Emily Wall, Litigation and Appeals Supervisor, Center for Family Representation  
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11:20 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Buffet Lunch**

12:30 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. **Breakouts**

**“You’re Not the Boss of Me”: Legal Defense Team Strategies for Effective Interdisciplinary Practice**

**Faculty:**

**Stephanie Hale**, Assistant Public Defender, Cattaraugus County Public Defender’s Office

**Savannah Kieper**, Senior Caseworker, Family Defense Unit, Monroe County Public Defender’s Office

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**Defending Parents against Substance Use Allegations in Article 10 Proceedings**

**Faculty:**

**Esenia Ekwofia**, Social Worker, Brooklyn Defender Services’ Family Defense Practice

**Jenny Ruymann**, Staff Attorney, Brooklyn Defender Services’ Family Defense Practice

**Carmen Tellez**, Senior Attorney, Brooklyn Defender Services’ Family Defense Practice

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1:50 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Break**

2:00 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. **Breakouts**

**Family Court: Where the Rules are “Made up” and “Nothing Makes Sense”**

**Faculty:**

**Karen Caggiano**, Family Court Bureau Chief, Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County

**Sara Behuniak**, Assistant Public Defender, St. Lawrence County Public Defender’s Office

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**Reimagining Interdisciplinary Practice: Using Out of Court Advocacy to Inform Legal Strategy**

**Faculty:**

**Sarah Goldstein**, Social Work Team Leader, Brooklyn Defender Services’ Family Defense Practice

**Daniela Mancini**, Supervising Attorney, Brooklyn Defender Services’ Family Defense Practice

**Sabrina Calloway**, Social Work Supervisor, Brooklyn Defender Services’ Family Defense Practice

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3:20 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. **Break**

3:30 p.m. – 4:50 p.m. **Recognizing Trauma Response in our Clients and Ourselves: Strategies and Solutions for the Family Court Practitioner**

**Faculty:**

**Sarah Holt**, Conflict Defender, Monroe County Conflict Defender’s Office

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4:50 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Closing Remarks**

**Patricia Warth**, Director, New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services

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One Elk Street, Albany, New York 12207

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