

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
STUDY COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE
TO THE ILLINOIS JUDICIAL CONFERENCE**

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I. STATEMENT ON COMMITTEE CONTINUATION

It is the function of the Study Committee on Juvenile Justice (Committee) to review and assess practices related to the processing of juvenile delinquency, abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. The Committee's stated purpose is to provide judges with current developments in the processing of juvenile court cases through up-dating and distributing the *Illinois Juvenile Law Benchbook*.

The Juvenile Law Benchbook, which consists of Volumes I and II, is designed to provide judges with a practical and convenient guide to procedural, evidentiary, and substantive issues arising in juvenile court proceedings. Each volume is organized transactionally, whereby issues are identified and discussed in the order in which they arise during the course of a case. In general, the discussions begin with an examination of how a case arrives in juvenile court and ends with post-dispositional matters such as termination of parental rights proceedings, termination of wardship, and appeal. The appendix in each volume contains procedural checklists and sample forms that can be used or adapted to meet the needs of each judge and the requirements of a particular county/circuit. Each volume is intended to provide judges with an overview of juvenile court proceedings, to direct them to relevant statutory provisions and case law, to highlight recent amendments, and to identify areas that present special challenges. Historically, the Committee has focused its attention on creating and updating this benchbook, each volume of which is updated every other year.

The Committee therefore believes that its work in providing instruction on the continually developing area of juvenile law is a valuable source of information for judges who preside over juvenile matters in Illinois. For this reason, the Committee requests that it be permitted to continue its work in Conference Year 2008.

II. SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

A. Committee Charge

The Committee is charged with studying and making recommendations on the processing of juvenile delinquency, abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. The Committee also is charged with preparing supplemental updates to the juvenile law benchbook for distribution to judges presiding over juvenile proceedings. Finally, the Committee's charge includes making recommendations regarding training for juvenile court judges on emerging issues of juvenile law identified during the course of the Committee's work on the benchbook or during Committee meetings. This charge provides the framework to guide the Committee's work during the Conference year.

Consistent with its charge, during this Conference year, the Committee will complete its update of Volume I of the Juvenile Law Benchbook. Volume I, published in 2000 and updated in 2005, addresses proceedings brought in juvenile court that involve allegations of delinquency, addicted minors, minors requiring authoritative intervention (MRAI) and truant minors in need of

supervision. It also addresses confidentiality and juvenile court records. In preparing the update to Volume I, the Committee researched statutory changes and relevant case law through June 2007. The Committee reasonably anticipates that its update to Volume I will be available for the New Judge Seminar in December 2007. Through its work on the benchbook, along with member participation in various juvenile law seminars, the Committee remains interested in the education of judges in juvenile issues.

The Committee also remains interested in other matters affecting juvenile law, including the status of pending juvenile law legislation and the implementation of Illinois' Program Improvement Plan in response to the federal Child and Family Services Review.

B. Conference Year 2006 Continued Projects/Priorities

The following subjects represent the projects/priorities assigned by the Court to the Committee for consideration in Conference Year 2006, which were extended into Conference Year 2007.

1. Confidentiality

The Committee was asked to review and make recommendations regarding the scope of confidentiality in juvenile matters. The Committee addressed this project by investigating the extent of statutes and case law regarding confidentiality in juvenile court proceedings. In particular, the Committee focused on the issue of confidentiality of personal identity.

In Conference Year 2006, the Committee formed a subcommittee, which researched and drafted provisions on confidentiality for inclusion in Volume II of the benchbook. The new provisions address issues as they relate to the scope of confidentiality for abuse, neglect, and dependency cases, including access to juvenile court proceedings/records by the press and for research purposes.

In Conference Year 2007, the Committee will complete this project by updating the existing section on confidentiality contained in Volume I of the benchbook, which discusses access to juvenile court hearings and to juvenile court records in the context of delinquency matters. In conjunction with its concern for confidentiality of personal identity, the Committee considered Supreme Court Rule 660, which provides that, in all appeals filed from proceedings under the Juvenile Court Act, the minor shall be identified by first name and last initial or by initials only. The Committee is in favor of utilizing the same procedure at the trial court level in cases involving notice by publication to parents in juvenile matters.

2. "Problem-Solving Courts"

The Court requested that the Committee study, examine and report on the efficacy of "Problem-Solving Courts" in the management of juvenile delinquency, abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. In Conference Year 2006, Judge Austin, on behalf of the Committee, sent a

letter to the chief judges in the state to canvass the existence/nature of any specialty courts handling juvenile cases. Due to the limited responses received, the Committee considered the results of the problem-solving courts survey that was prepared by the IJC Criminal Law and Probation Administration Committee. That survey rendered information on juvenile problem-solving courts from Cook County, Kane County, Peoria County and Will County. The Committee formed a subcommittee to review the referenced survey responses and to follow up with the judges and the probation departments responding to the survey about additional details, including the number of juveniles in the program and its effectiveness. The Committee is in the process of assessing the efficacy of the four juvenile problem-solving courts and will prepare a report for the Court's consideration.

C. Conference Year 2007 Projects/Priorities

In Conference Year 2007, the Committee was assigned the project of gathering information from each circuit court regarding their need for mental health evaluations and services for juveniles. In addressing this project, the Committee is preparing a survey, in the form of a questionnaire, whereby each circuit is asked to describe the nature and availability of mental health evaluations/services it offers for juveniles. Each circuit offering such services also is asked to provide some statistical information and to comment on the adequacy of its services and application of assessment results in rendering a dispositional order. It is the Committee's goal to prepare a reference list of mental health services available for juveniles for the Court's consideration.

III. PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT CONFERENCE YEAR

During the 2008 Conference year, the Committee seeks to update Volume II of the *Illinois Juvenile Law Benchbook*, which addresses juvenile court proceedings involving allegations of abuse, neglect and dependency. The Committee further requests that it be permitted to continue its review of mental health services available for juveniles in Illinois.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is making no recommendations to the Conference at this time.