

Continuing Legal Education Presentation Handout

Course Title:

At the Crossroads: Legal Advocacy for Youth in Crisis
Navigating Education, Delinquency, and Child Welfare Systems

Total CLE Credit: 15 hours (Over 2 Days Aboard a Cruise Ship)

- 12 General/Dual Hours
- 3 Ethics/Dual Hours

Course Overview:

Set sail for professional growth with this immersive CLE experience designed for attorneys at all levels. This 15-hour course explores the legal intersections between special education, juvenile justice, mental health, and child welfare, with a focus on trauma-informed and ethically sound advocacy. Ideal for those who represent children—and equally valuable for general practitioners—this unique training takes place over two days aboard a cruise ship, providing both insight and inspiration.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand key legal frameworks governing education, disability, juvenile justice, and child welfare
- Analyze how systemic issues and trauma affect legal outcomes for youth
- Apply trauma-informed, culturally competent strategies in legal advocacy
- Navigate ethical dilemmas in complex, multi-system representation
- Support transitions and services for aging-out foster youth

Agenda & Detailed Course Descriptions:

Foundations of Special Education Law (1 hr)

This course provides an essential overview of the legal protections for students with disabilities. Topics include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Key concepts covered include Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Child Find obligations, and procedural safeguards.

IEP Advocacy & Due Process (1 hr)

This session covers effective advocacy in IEP development and dispute resolution, including how to prepare for and conduct due process hearings, mediation, and complaint procedures. Focus will be placed on legal strategy, documentation, and ensuring procedural compliance.

Special Education & Delinquency (2 hrs)

This two-hour session examines how educational disabilities intersect with juvenile justice involvement. Topics include manifestation determination reviews, behavioral intervention

plans, and how unmet educational needs contribute to delinquency. Legal advocacy strategies for juvenile court and school discipline contexts are emphasized.

Mental Health & Juvenile Justice (1 hr)

This session explores advocacy for youth with mental health diagnoses involved in delinquency proceedings. Focus includes the role of psychological evaluations, treatment planning, and issues related to competency to stand trial and services in detention or residential placements.

Coordinating Multi-System Services (1 hr)

Attorneys will learn strategies for advocating across systems—juvenile justice, child welfare, education, and behavioral health. The course emphasizes case coordination, confidentiality considerations, and legal mechanisms to ensure continuity of services.

School-to-Prison Pipeline (1 hr)

This course focuses on legal responses to policies and practices that push students out of school and into the juvenile justice system. Topics include zero-tolerance discipline, school policing, racial disparities, and legal reform efforts.

Ethical Advocacy for Youth with Disabilities (1.5 hr)

Explores ethical obligations when representing youth with disabilities, including capacity assessments, substituted judgment vs. best interest standards, and confidentiality in education and delinquency matters.

Ethical Challenges in Complex Youth Advocacy (1.5 hr)

This course discusses ethical dilemmas in cases involving overlapping systems. Topics include dual representation, conflicts of interest, cross-agency confidentiality, and navigating systemic bias.

Child Welfare Law & Federal Policy (2 hrs)

This session reviews the federal framework for child welfare law, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Case studies and policy updates will be included.

Aging Out of Foster Care (1 hr)

Focuses on legal rights and support systems for youth aging out of state custody. Covers federal law, transition planning, education and housing access, and advocacy for post-discharge services.

Trauma-Informed Legal Practice (1 hr)

Participants will learn how trauma affects client communication, decision-making, and behavior. Legal strategies will be presented to incorporate trauma-informed principles into representation and court advocacy.

Cultural Competence & Bias in Representation (1 hr)

This course helps attorneys recognize and address implicit bias, understand cultural identity in advocacy, and develop culturally responsive practices when representing diverse youth.

Who Should Attend?

- Attorneys representing children and youth in any setting
- General practitioners seeking practical tools to support vulnerable clients
- Family law and criminal defense attorneys
- Lawyers working with immigrant youth or school-related issues
- Judicial officers and mediators
- Legal professionals interested in expanding into education or child welfare law

Presenter Bio:

Marjorie Bristol, JD

Marjorie graduated from Maryville College with a BA in English and the University of Tennessee Law School.

Marjorie began her legal career representing individuals sentenced to death in challenging their death sentences at the Office of the Post-Conviction Defender. Later, she spent almost four years working for the Tennessee Justice Center fighting for the rights of children and adults against Tennessee's Medicaid program.

Following her tenure at the Tennessee Justice Center, Marjorie spent four years in private practice primarily representing children as Guardian Ad Litem in dependency and neglect cases. Marjorie then worked for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services for more than 6 years where she served as the agency's lead education attorney and juvenile justice attorney.

In 2017, Marjorie opened her current practice which focuses on the needs of children in the areas of education, delinquency, and mental health services.

CLE Credit:

- Total: 15 hours
- General/Dual: 12 hours
- Ethics/Dual: 3 hours