

# TOGETHER WE CAN CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 6-8



# 2024 PROGRAM

*Hive of Hope:  
Connecting,  
Strengthening,  
Serving  
Well-BEEing for  
Positive Change*

Cajundome Conference  
Center  
444 Cajundome Blvd.  
Lafayette, Louisiana  
[www.latwc.org](http://www.latwc.org)



# KEYNOTES:

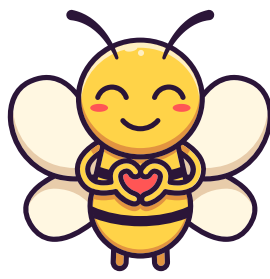
Keynotes 1 and 3 and Friday Lunch will be in Exhibit Hall A  
 Thursday Lunch and Keynotes 2 and 4 will be in Exhibit Hall B



# INSTITUTES AND BREAKOUTS:

	Institutes	100 Series	200 Series	300 Series	400 Series	
Cajundome Meeting Rooms	Evangeline	10	101	206	307	401
	Iberia	9	103	207	309	407
	St. Martin	8	109	204	306	406
	St. Landry	4	102	208	308	403
	Acadia	NA	105	210	310	410
1st Floor	Exhibit Hall A	5	NA	NA	NA	NA
Convention Center - 2nd Floor	Zydeco	7	110	205	303	409
	Jazz	1	108	203	304	408
	Gospel	2	106	201	301	404
	Cajun	6	107	202	302	405
	Blues	3	104	209	305	402

# WELCOME

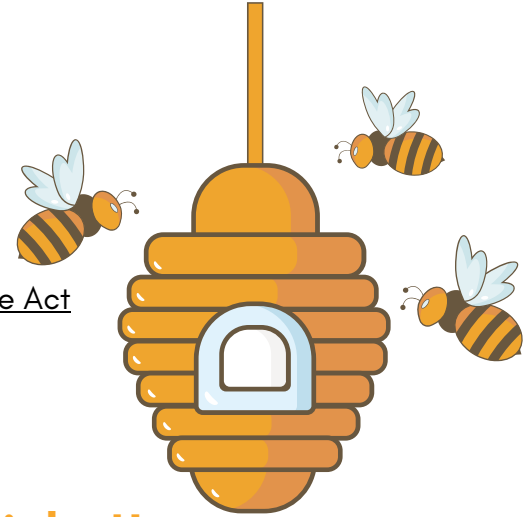


## Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving Well-BEEing for Positive Change

Welcome to our three-day conference for professionals and volunteers who are working together to make a difference for abused and neglected children. This conference strives to be a multi-disciplinary event with sessions that will address the educational needs of social workers, attorneys, judges, educational leaders, CASA staff and volunteers, Child Advocacy Center staff, Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT), law enforcement, foster parents, counselors, faith-based leaders and more!



### Conference Host Organizations

- [Louisiana CASA Association](#)
- [Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy](#)
- [Louisiana Children's Trust Fund](#)
- [Louisiana's Department of Child and Family Services - Children's Justice Act](#)
- [Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parents Association](#)
- [Louisiana Supreme Court - Court Improvement Program](#)
- [Pelican Center for Children & Families](#)



### CLE/CEU General Hours and Specialty Hours

Hours not identified as specialty, have been approved as GENERAL CEU/CLE.

	# Credit Hours	CLE Ethics 	CLE Prof 	SW Ethics 	SW Clinical 
DAY 1 Nov 6 Institutes	3 CEU & CLE Hours Total	Institute 1 (1 hr)	Institute 1 (1 hr)	Institute 1 Institute 5	Institute 6 Institute 7 Institute 8 Institute 9
Day 2 Nov 7	6.25 CEU & 5.5 CLE Hours Total	Lunch Keynote not approved for CLE	101, 102		104, 110, 205, 303, 304, 305
Day 3 Nov 8	4.25 CEU & 4 CLE Hours Total				404

# QUICK INFO



Wednesday	November 6
Thursday	November 7
1 - 4:30 pm	Institutes (Break 2:30-3pm)
8:30 - 10 am	Opening Keynote 1
10:15 am - 11:45 am	100 Series Workshops
12 - 1 pm	Lunch Keynote 2
1:15 - 2:45 pm	200 Series Workshops
3 - 4:30 pm	300 Series Workshops
Friday	November 8
8:30 - 10 am	Opening Keynote 3
10:15 am - 12:15 pm	400 Series Workshops
12:30 - 2 pm	Lunch Keynote 4

## Exhibits and Handouts

Exhibitor information and presenter handouts can be downloaded directly using our conference event app on Whova (don't worry, we'll talk about it more on the next page); but just in case apps aren't your PB&J, handouts will also be available on the TWC website from November 6 - December 15 [www.latwc.org](http://www.latwc.org). Keep in mind some speakers don't provide handouts for distribution.

## CLE/CEU Credits

You'll verify your attendance and credit hours each day using the Conference Evaluation Survey distributed on the Whova app and posted to the LATWC.org website. Certificates will be sent out within 30 days after the conference via email, PLUS all CLE hours will be entered online for legal attendees within 30 days. All specialty credits will be identified as such in the WHOVA app. Contact Dr. Delvisco after the event with questions concerning your credits/certificates: [sharon@teamdyn.com](mailto:sharon@teamdyn.com).

## Session Selections

This year we are going to join the ranks of national conferences and not have attendees pre-select sessions. You will simply go to a session and find a chair. If there are no chairs available, you must go to a different session. Those attending online will be viewing a limited schedule. We will be rotating the topic tracks to provide a wide range of info.

## Speaker Bio Information

All speakers have provided us with a bio paragraph. This information is on the event platform and can be accessed through the app.

# CONFERENCE INTEREST TRACKS

ALL Sessions are OPEN to ALL Attendees.

Interest  
to All

Legal

Foster  
Parent and  
Kinship  
Care



Keynote

Social  
Work

CASA

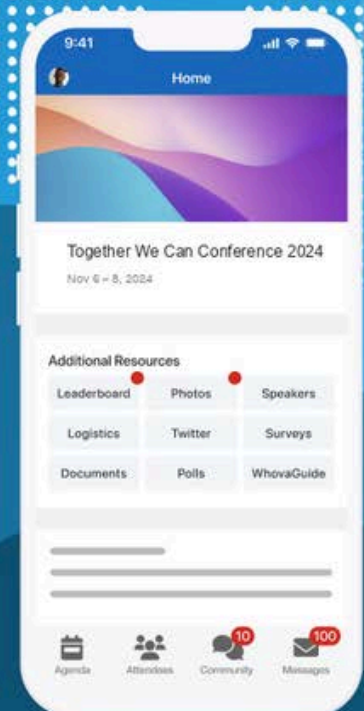
TWC  
Institutes



Together We Can Conference 2024

Use the *Whova* app to make  
the most of the event!

- ➔ Event announcements & notifications
- ➔ Personalized agenda ➔ Session details
- ➔ Speaker & attendee profiles ➔ Networking  
and so much more!



# KEYNOTE SESSIONS



Keynotes 1, 3 and 4 will be in Exhibit Hall A

Keynote 2 will be in Exhibit Hall B



## 1. Thursday, November 7, 2024 8:30 - 10 am

Enjoying Excellence as a Leader

Earl Suttle, PhD

In this highly interactive session, you will gain a better understanding of your role as leader of your team and identify your leadership strengths to increase accountability. By your example, your team members will grow and increase performance. This session highlights how to develop a more positive attitude. You will gain greater commitment to establish and maintain your own brand of excellence and increase your influence with others.

## 2. Thursday, November 7, 2024 12 - 1 pm

The Science and Power of Hope

Dr. Chan Hellman

The Steering Committee extends special thanks to our sponsors, Louisiana CASA and the CASA Assistance Program of the Louisiana Supreme Court, for making this TWC Keynote session possible. Hope is not about wishing; hope is about taking action toward desired outcomes. The robust body of research shows hope is a psychological strength that can be nurtured and is one of the strongest protective factors for those experiencing trauma and adversity. This Keynote will introduce the science of hope and discuss how trauma and adversity can rob hope. More importantly, the research conducted by the presenter shows how simple strategies can nurture and restore hope for healing and well-being.



## 3. Friday, November 8, 2024 8:30 - 10 am

Connecting, Strengthening, Serving: Frightened, Scared, and Alone No More

Terrica Lynn Smith

Join us for a powerful keynote session at the Together We Can Conference, themed "Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving," with Terrica Lynn Smith, author of "Frightened, Scared, and Alone, No More!" In this inspiring address, Terrica will share her journey of overcoming fear and isolation within the child welfare system. She will explore themes of resilience, empowerment, and the transformative power of hope. Terrica's compelling narrative will highlight the importance of connection and support in healing from trauma. This keynote aims to inspire attendees to foster environments where children feel safe, supported, and empowered to thrive.



## 4. Friday, November 8, 2024 12 - 1:30 pm

Follow the Love

Dr. Elizabeth Wynter

Are you seeking a catalyst for a profound shift in your perceptions of system involved youth and their experiences? Are decisions driven by the best interests of the young individuals and their connections, or are they influenced primarily by the agendas of our agencies and funders? This keynote provides a compelling narrative woven with powerful insights and experiences and aspires to spark a fundamental transformation in our understanding, support, and advocacy for system-involved youth.



# INSTITUTES

Wednesday November 6, 2024

1 pm to 4:30 pm

## Institute 1

**Upholding Legal Professionalism and Ethics in Child Welfare**

Franchesca Hamilton Acker, JD & Richard Pittman, JD

Join this critical session on legal professionalism and ethics within the child welfare system. This session will provide an in-depth exploration of the ethical obligations and professional standards that guide legal practitioners working with children and families. Participants will engage in discussions on common ethical dilemmas, best practices for maintaining integrity and professionalism, and the importance of ethical decision-making in ensuring justice and advocacy for vulnerable populations. This session aims to equip legal professionals with the knowledge and tools to navigate the complexities of ethical practice in child welfare.

Section A: Ethical Considerations When Families Lack Immigration Status

Section B: Professionalism Considerations When Families Lack Immigration Status

## Institute 2

**Mastering the Courtroom: Effective Testimony Techniques for Child Welfare Professionals**

Judge Jennifer Womble, JD & Kären Hallstrom, JD

This session offers an immersive courtroom simulation designed to equip social workers with the skills needed to provide effective testimony. Participants will engage in role-playing exercises, receive expert guidance on courtroom procedures, and learn strategies for clear, concise, and impactful communication. This hands-on experience aims to demystify the courtroom process and empower social workers to advocate effectively for their clients.

## Institute 3

**Self-Care Your Ethical Responsibility: How Ethical Are You?**

Patsy Johnson, LCSW-BACS & Lillian Smith, LCSW

During this course, participants will engage in learning activities to enhance their knowledge and skills about ethics, trauma, and self-care. They will identify the impact of stress, trauma, and triggers and be able to explain why we must make self-care our personal and professional responsibility to make a positive impact on our emotional, physical, and mental well-being and be able to help others more effectively.

## Institute 4

**Preventing Human Trafficking: Strategies for Protection and Advocacy**

Monica Taylor & Mary Kate Andrepont

This session will provide an in-depth exploration of human trafficking, focusing on identifying risk factors, recognizing signs, and implementing effective prevention strategies. Participants will learn about the complex dynamics of human trafficking, the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach, and how to support survivors. This session aims to equip social workers, educators, caregivers, and community members with the knowledge and tools necessary to combat human trafficking and protect vulnerable populations.

## Institute 5

**FORECAST Trauma-Informed & Self-Care Experience**

Patsy Wilkerson, MA, Ronisha Johnson, LMSW, Jael Dugas, & Bobby Bernard, Jr.

Project F.O.R.E.C.A.S.T. Trauma-informed Simulation is an intensive & engaging learning experience that introduces critical concepts for helping children impacted by trauma, abuse, neglect and loss. In addition, this session, engages participants in healthy self-care strategies and practices. Project F.O.R.E.C.A.S.T. is a unique educational experience designed to: Help child-serving professionals make better decisions in situations involving childhood trauma; The interactive training simulates real-world scenarios and can better prepare participants for the complex challenges of trauma-informed care; Include a strong emphasis in providing personal and professional self-care for workers; & Integration of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (D.E.I. & B.) practices.



Gospel

Blues

St. Landry

Exhibit Hall A Ballroom

Together We Can Conference

November 6-8, 2024

# INSTITUTES

Wednesday November 6, 2024

1 pm to 4:30 pm



## Institute 6

**Counseling Tips for Cultivating Impactful Connections**

Michelle Many, LCSW-BACS

In this session, participants will explore strategies to forge meaningful and effective connections in a counseling context. This session, aligned with the conference theme "Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving," will delve into techniques that counselors can use to build trust, foster open communication, and support their clients in achieving their goals. Attendees will learn practical tips to enhance their counseling skills and create a supportive environment that encourages positive change and growth.

Cajun

## Institute 7

**Inclusive Practices: LGBTQIA+ Youth**

Del'Rio Cole, DSW(c), LMSW

This session is designed to equip child welfare professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to provide inclusive and bias-free services to individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+. Participants will explore key concepts related to gender and sexual diversity, engage in discussions about potential biases in child welfare settings, and learn practical strategies for creating a welcoming environment. Through a combination of informative presentation and interactive discussions, attendees will gain insights that will enhance their ability to offer culturally competent and affirming care to all.

Zydeco

## Institute 8

**Riding The Waves: Empowered Communication**

Tasha Levert, PhD

Learn practical communication strategies to navigate challenging interactions with difficult individuals. Gain insights into assertive communication, conflict resolution, and maintaining relationships with confidence. Ideal for anyone seeking tools to handle difficult people in both personal and professional settings.

St. Martin

## Institute 9

Elizabeth Power, M.Ed.

**Avoiding Re-traumatization: Best Practices for Supporting Children and Families**

Attend this session to learn more about avoiding re-traumatization in children and families who have experienced trauma. This session will provide a deep dive into understanding the effects of trauma and the importance of trauma-informed care. Participants will learn about practical strategies and best practices to prevent re-traumatization, ensuring that interactions and interventions promote healing and resilience. This session is designed for caregivers, social workers, educators, and professionals dedicated to supporting vulnerable populations with empathy and sensitivity.

Iberia

## Institute 10

**Transitioning from a Mandated Reporter to a Community Supporter**

Dr. Charity Chandler-Cole

Using United States history, Los Angeles County-specific data and lived experience narratives to tell the story of what brings families into contact with the child welfare system and explore strategies for meaningful change that will benefit all. This session will equip participants with actionable opportunities they can immediately take at the systemic, organizational and individual levels to start the collective journey of moving from mandated reporter to community supporter.

Evangeline



**Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving  
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Together We Can Conference

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# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Thursday November 7, 2024

10:15 to 11:45 am



Evangeline

## Session 101

Championing Children's Mental Health Rights in CINC Cases

Rebecca May-Ricks, JD, CWLS & Kathy Cook, JD

Dive into the critical topic of mental health rights for children involved in Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases at the Together We Can Conference, themed "Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving." This session will provide an in-depth look at the circumstances under which children are entitled to the appointment of a Mental Health Advocacy Service (MHAS) attorney, the pivotal role of these attorneys, and the rights of children when placed in psychiatric facilities. Through case studies, legal frameworks, and practical guidance, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of how to advocate for and protect the mental health rights of children in the child welfare system.

## Session 102

Tips for Working with Prosecutors to Achieve the Best Outcomes for Families in CINC Proceedings

Curtis Nelson, JD

St. Landry

This session will provide valuable insights and strategies for effectively collaborating with prosecutors in Child in Need of Care (CINC) proceedings. Participants will learn how to build productive relationships, communicate effectively, and advocate for the best interests of families and children. The session aims to equip child welfare professionals, social workers, and legal advocates with the tools necessary to navigate the legal system and achieve positive outcomes for families.

## Session 103

Adoptions and Children without Immigration Status

Cassandra R. Johnson, Sandra B. Terrell, JD, Cheryl Tirado, LCSW, and Kristin M. Jones, JD

Iberia

Immigration status is an integral part of a Child in Need of Care (CINC) case for children without immigration status (undocumented). These are children who come to the United States from other countries and enter the custody of the Department of Children and Services (DCFS). Successful agency adoptions of these children are possible. As DCFS workers, it is critical to understand that there are pathways to lawful status that may be available, for example, Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status. Title IV-E questions are complicated. Come learn about how we can best work together to assist these children. This session is particularly important for DCFS Child Protective Services, Foster Care, and Adoption case workers and other interested child advocates.

## Session 104

Preventing Sexual Abuse: Training Curriculum Insights from the Department of Children and Family Services

Katherine Prejean, MS, Stacie LeBlanc, JD, MEd, and Viola Vaughan-Eden, PhD, MJ, LCSW

Blues

Join us for an essential session on preventing sexual abuse through effective training. This session will showcase the comprehensive training curriculum developed by the Department of Children and Family Services. Participants will explore the curriculum's key components, understand its implementation strategies, and learn about the positive impact it has on protecting children. This session aims to equip attendees with the knowledge and tools necessary to prevent sexual abuse and promote a safe environment for children and families.



Together We Can  
Conference

Making a Difference  
for Abused & Neglected Children  
latwc.org

Together We Can Conference

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# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Thursday November 7, 2024

10:15 to 11:45 am



## Session 105

**Permanency Goals and Concurrent Planning: Appropriateness, Timing, and Implementation in CINC Cases**  
Michelle Gros, JD, LaTrese LeCour, & Renee Spell, LCSW-BASC

St. Mary

Explore the critical roles of permanency goals & concurrent planning in securing stable, long-term outcomes for children in foster care. Learn about types of permanency goals, such as reunification, adoption, and guardianship, including their legal requirements, appropriateness, and the services and supports needed to prepare the child and family to achieve the goal. Critical legal timelines for permanency goals will be provided including how and when to use and change a concurrent plan to ensure timely and effective decision-making. This session is designed to provide CW professionals, SW, and legal advocates with the tools needed to navigate complex cases and promote stability to ensure timely permanency.

## Session 106

**Empowering Families: Navigating Resources for DCFS Kinship Services**  
Jacqueline McFarland & Tarnisha Mayfield, DCFS

Gospel

Join us for a comprehensive session on navigating resources for families involved in DCFS kinship services. This session will provide valuable insights into the support and resources available to kinship caregivers through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Participants will learn about the various programs, financial assistance, and community resources designed to help kinship families thrive. This session aims to equip caregivers, social workers, and advocates with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively support children in kinship care.

## Session 107

**A Closer Look at Child Development: Understanding and Nurturing Growth**  
Sharon Worthy, LMSW

Cajun

This session will provide a comprehensive overview of the key stages and milestones in child development, exploring the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social growth of children from infancy through adolescence. Participants will learn about the factors that influence development, early identification of developmental delays, and effective strategies to support children at every stage. This session is designed to equip caregivers, educators, and professionals with the knowledge and tools to nurture and promote healthy development in children.

## Session 108

**Beyond Physical Health: Engaging the Managed Care Organization (Insurance Provider) to Support the Stability of Children and Youth in Custodial Care**  
Dr. Marie Smith, Aetna Better Health of LA & Dr. Shantrell Charles

Jazz

This session will provide insight into the untapped MCO Value-added Benefits (VAB's) that are available to all Medicaid recipients, focusing on children in state custody, through the assignment of a case manager to support their long-term stability through transition.

## Session 109

**Saving our state one youth at a time: Louisiana Youth Challenge Program**  
Anna Barrett

St. Martin

The presenter will provide an overview of the LA Youth Challenge Program as a FREE resource for 16-18-year-olds struggling in school at home or both to take advantage of a FREE alternative residential education program.

## Session 110

**A Focus on Safety for Families Experiencing Substance Use**  
Dr. Joy Bracey

Zydeco

This session will explore the unique safety challenges faced by families impacted by substance use and strategies for child welfare professionals, caregivers, and legal advocates to address these risks effectively. Learn about best practices for creating & implementing safety plans, supporting recovery efforts, and fostering a safe and stable environment for children. The session will equip attendees with the tools to prioritize safety while promoting family preservation and healing.

# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Thursday November 7, 2024

1:15 to 2:45 pm



## Session 201

### Special Immigration Juvenile Status

Judge Thomas R. Duplantier, Kristin M. Jones, JD, & Sandra B. Terrell

Undocumented children in Child in Need of Care (CINC) proceedings are often eligible for some kind of immigration status. Although there are different types of immigration status that may be available, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) is by far the most common. SIJS is also the type of immigration status where child welfare stakeholders may have a significant role to play. SIJS was created to allow children without lawful immigration status – and without complete parental support – to remain in the United States legally and receive protection from the state. Children with SIJS are eligible to apply for lawful permanent residency, or a green card. Our speakers will explain SIJS in detail: children who may be eligible, benefits of SIJS, and the role of the juvenile court in SIJS. They will also outline the steps child welfare stakeholders should take in cases involving children without immigration status.

Gospel

## Session 202

### Enhancing Permanency and Placement Stability: Insights from Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR)

Mark Harris, JD Renee Spell, & LaTrese LeCour

Learn about improving permanency and placement stability in child welfare through the lens of Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). This session, featuring insights from data evaluation, will focus on understanding the key issues affecting permanency and placement stability. Participants will learn about best practices, data-driven strategies, and policy recommendations to enhance outcomes for children and families. This session aims to increase awareness and foster collaborative efforts to create more stable and permanent living situations for children in the child welfare system.

Cajun

## Session 203

### The Availability of Civil Legal Services as a Prevention Method to Support Families at Risk of Removals

Judge John C. Davidson, JD, Destiny Fatula, & Emily Aucoin, JD

This session will explore how civil legal services can be a powerful tool in preventing family separations and supporting families at risk of child removals. Participants will gain insights into the types of civil legal services available, the impact these services can have on family stability, and how to effectively connect families with legal support. This session aims to equip social workers, legal professionals, and community advocates with the knowledge and strategies needed to leverage civil legal services to keep families together.

Jazz

## Session 204

### Empowering Through Education: Helping Youth to Live Their Best LYFE

Amanda M. Shackelford

Join us at the Together We Can Conference, themed "Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving," for an impactful session on "Empowering Through Education: Helping Youth to Live Their Best LYFE". This session will introduce participants to the LYFE (Louisiana Youth For Excellence) program framework, a comprehensive program designed to educate and empower youth to recognize, prevent, and respond positively to at-risk behaviors. Attendees will learn about the program's key components, its evidence-based approach, and strategies for effectively implementing the program in schools and communities. The session aims to equip educators, social workers, and child advocates with the tools necessary to protect and empower young people through proactive education.

St. Martin

## Session 205

### Healing Bonds: Fostering Attachment After Maltreatment

Tonyalea Elam, LCSW

This session will delve into the complexities of attachment disorders and the impact of trauma on a child's ability to form healthy relationships. Participants will learn about therapeutic approaches and practical strategies to support children in building secure attachments, promoting healing and resilience. This session aims to equip caregivers, social workers, and educators with the tools to nurture and restore trust and connection in the lives of affected children.

Zydeco

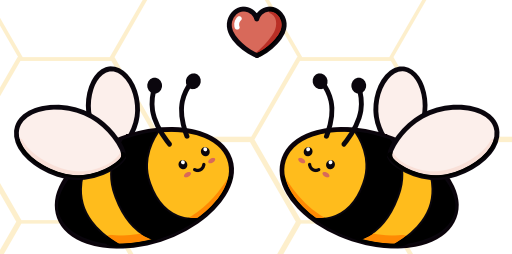
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# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Thursday November 7, 2024

1:15 to 2:45 pm



## Session 206

**Ensuring Safe Reunification: Crafting Effective Safety Plans for Family Reunification**

Rodney Hastings, JD, Sholanda Ellis, & Etrana Gerard

Join us at the Together We Can Conference, themed "Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving," for a crucial session on "Ensuring Safe Reunification: Crafting Effective Safety Plans for Family Reunification." This session will explore the critical role of safety plans in the successful reunification of children with their families after separation due to safety concerns. Participants will gain insights into the key components of effective safety plans, strategies for assessing family readiness, and best practices for ongoing monitoring and support. The session is designed to equip child welfare professionals, social workers, and legal advocates with the tools and knowledge needed to ensure that reunifications are safe, stable, and sustainable.

Evangeline

## Session 207

**Empowering Parents and Caregivers: Supporting Children with Disabilities**

Nicole Flores & Susan Riehn

Join this session dedicated to empowering parents and caregivers to effectively support children with disabilities. This session will provide valuable insights and practical strategies to help caregivers navigate the unique challenges and opportunities involved in raising children with disabilities. Attendees will learn how to build a supportive environment, access resources, and advocate for their child's needs, ensuring a nurturing and inclusive setting for growth and development.

St. Landry

## Session 208

**Supporting Unaccompanied Children and Foreign Nationals**

Juliana Diaz & Mario Figueroa

Our presentation will cover Home Study and Post Release Services in Louisiana, along with an overview of unaccompanied children and foreign nationals migrating to the U.S. We will also address trauma-informed care practices, effective response strategies, and cultural considerations for child welfare workers engaging with these populations through case conceptualization.

Iberia

**Session 209 - Strategies for Parents to Maintain Kinship Ties When Children are Removed from Home**

Facilitator: Judge Ernestine Gray, JD (retired) for Samantha Morrison, Pasqual Nguyen, Evangeline Boudreaux, Hailee, Hinson, and Asha Solea Duplechin

This session will focus on empowering parents to maintain meaningful relationships with their children and extended family members when children are placed in out-of-home care. Participants will learn strategies for navigating the child welfare system, fostering positive kinship connections, and utilizing available resources to ensure that children remain connected to their family roots and culture. Panelists include parents with lived experience. This session is designed to provide parents, caregivers, and child welfare professionals with practical tools to strengthen family bonds during times of separation.

Blues

## Session 210

**Whole Health Louisiana: A Holistic Approach to Family Well-being**

Liz Skilton, PhD

This session will explore the Whole Health Louisiana initiative, which focuses on integrating physical, mental, and social health services to support the overall well-being of individuals and families. Participants will learn about the program's key components, its community-based approach, and how it addresses the unique health needs of Louisiana's diverse populations. This session aims to provide child welfare professionals, healthcare providers, and community advocates with a comprehensive understanding of how to implement and promote whole health strategies that strengthen families and communities.

Acadia

Together We Can Conference

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# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Thursday November 7, 2024

3 to 4:30 pm



## Session 301

**ICWA: Rights of Native American Children and Families**

**Guy Lain, JD, Natasha Fossett, JD, Shalonda Ellis, DCFS, & LaToya Saulsby, DCFS**

This session will focus on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a landmark federal law designed to protect the rights of Native American children and preserve their connection to their culture and tribes. Participants will gain an in-depth understanding of ICWA's provisions, the importance of cultural heritage in child welfare cases, and how to navigate the complexities of complying with ICWA in family court and child welfare proceedings. This session is vital for legal advocates, child welfare professionals, and tribal representatives working with Native American families.

Gospel

## Session 302

**Witness Preparation: Empowering Testimony for Success in the Courtroom**

**Nzinga Hill, JD**

Prepare witnesses to shine in the courtroom with confidence and clarity! Join us at the Together We Can Conference, themed "Hive of Hope: Connecting, Strengthening, Serving," for a session dedicated to the art of witness preparation. This workshop will provide lawyers with the tools and techniques to effectively prepare witnesses, ensuring their testimony is truthful, coherent, and impactful. Through practical exercises and expert insights, participants will learn how to address witnesses' concerns, enhance their communication skills, and build their confidence for court appearances.

Cajun

## Session 303

**Fostering Happy, and Emotionally Healthy Kids, Strategies for Brain Development**

**Corie Hebert, PhD & Tonyalea Elam, LMSW**

This session will delve into the essential strategies for promoting optimal brain development and emotional well-being in children. Participants will learn about the critical stages of brain development, the impact of early experiences on emotional health, and practical approaches to creating supportive environments that nurture a child's growth. This session aims to equip caregivers, educators, and child welfare professionals with evidence-based techniques to foster happiness and emotional resilience in children.

Zydeco

## Session 304

**Addiction is a Family Health Emergency! Supporting Family Wellness through Overdose Prevention, Narcan Education, and Connection to Evidenced-Based Treatment**

**Melissa Stainback, PhD & Traci Hedrick, LAC**

This presentation will address national and statewide shifts in drug overdose trends; new ways of thinking about substance use disorder and evidenced-based treatment models; finally, it will share evidenced-based interventions for families struggling with problematic opioid use including how to obtain Narcan, how to use Narcan, and how to connect families to other life-saving services and treatment.

Jazz

## Session 305

**LEAF - Louisiana Elite Advocacy Force: Empowering Advocates for Child Welfare Excellence**

**Samantha LaCour & Keyana Bradley**

The LEAF Louisiana Elite Advocacy Force is a specialized program dedicated to advancing excellence in child welfare advocacy. In this session, participants will gain insights into the mission, principles, and strategies of LEAF, with a focus on enhancing the skills and knowledge of child welfare professionals. Through the lived experience of the expert panelists, participants will hear success stories and discover how LEAF empowers advocates to make a significant impact on the lives of children and families in Louisiana's child welfare system.

Evangeline



Together We Can Conference

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# BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS

Thursday November 7, 2024

3 to 4:30 pm



St. Martin

## Session 306

**When They Take It Back: The MDT's Response to Recantations**

Lindsey Dula, National Forensic Interviewing Network

The potential for recantation is a reality for any case regarding allegations of child abuse. What is critical is understanding dynamics that increase the likelihood of recantation so as to better identify those factors and understand how to proactively respond to them. The MDT's reaction to cases involving recantations is imperative for an appropriate response that continues to seek justice and integrate appropriate services for the family.

## Session 307

**Substance Exposed Newborns: Supports and Resources for Families**

Moderator: Michelle Gros, JD, for Dr. Meghan Howell, Bridget Nalley, Foster/Adoptive Parent, Katherine Penton, Parent, and Dr. Rebecca Hook, DCFS Medical Director

This session will focus on providing comprehensive information and resources to support families with substance-exposed newborns. Participants will learn about the medical, developmental, and emotional challenges faced by these newborns and their families. The session will highlight available resources, interventions, and support systems designed to promote the health and well-being of both the infants and their families. Attendees will leave with practical knowledge and tools to effectively support these vulnerable families.

Blues

## Session 308

**Holistic Representation and Community Partnerships: Representation Beyond the Pleadings**

Emily Aucoin, JD & Ramona Fernandez, JD

This session will provide guidance on holistic representation that can be utilized in CINC proceedings by all child welfare stakeholders. Learn from case studies about the importance of a holistic approach the long-term impacts of rushing a case to closure.

St. Landry

## Session 309

**Faces Behind the Files**

Samantha Morrison, Jarvis Spearman, MSW, LMSW, & Sarah Hood, JD

The directives that states are receiving from the federal Children's Bureau emphasize engaging persons who have lived experience with a Child in Need of Care case including parents and children or youth. Persons who have first-hand contact with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the legal system can and should help guide and direct efforts to improve our child welfare system. Parents and children bring clarity to the broader implications of our actions, allowing us to improve our approach to individuals and their cases. Samantha Morrison and Jarvis Spearman will share about their experiences in the Louisiana child welfare system. Former assistant district attorney Sarah Hood will give her perspective as well.

Iberia

## Session 310

**Introduction to Trauma Informed Care**

Sheri Eastridge

Whatever settings we work in, just about all of us work with people. Through foundational research on experiences of childhood adversity, like the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study and the Philadelphia ACE Study, we have learned that at least 70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced at least one traumatic event. In this workshop, we will talk about the principles of trauma-informed care and how incorporating a trauma-informed approach in our work can help us not only better assist the people we serve but also improve the workplace for everyone.

Acadia

# EVENING AWARDS RECEPTION

**Thursday November 7, 2024**  
**6 pm to 8 pm**  
**Awards at Vermilionville**



Join us for an evening of food, music and dancing. Meet up with colleagues and friends from many fields and professions. Share a table and dance a bit. The catering department at Vermilionville always brings us great Cajun treats. Our favorite band, Terry and the Zydeco Bad Boys, will be making a reunion with us after our absence of four years. Come relax and listen to the music.

Vermilionville is located at 300 Fishers Road, Lafayette. Please drive safely. You must provide your own transportation for the evening event.



**Together We Can Conference**

**November 6-8, 2024**

# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Friday November 8, 2024

10:15 am to 12:15 pm



Evangeline

## Session 401

**Navigating FINS and Delinquency: Supporting Youth and Families in Crisis**  
Storm Ehlers, JD, Maria Hundley, Jack Harrison, & Raegan Nguyen

This session will explore the distinctions and intersections between FINS cases and delinquency proceedings, focusing on how to support youth and families navigating these complex legal processes. Participants will learn about the legal frameworks, intervention strategies, and resources available to assist families in crisis. The session aims to equip social workers, legal professionals, and community advocates with the knowledge and tools needed to promote positive outcomes for at-risk youth and their families.

## Session 402

**Recent Developments in Law and Policy**  
Richard Pittman, JD, CWLS, Kathy Lynn Cook, JD, CWLS, & Kayana Bradley

HB39, now Act 92, was signed by the Governor on May 21, 2024. The Act establishes an “Advice of Rights for Children” provision in the Louisiana Children’s Code. This new article will become effective on August 1st and requires judges to advise children who are ten years of age and older that they are a party to the proceedings and of their rights, such as the right to have notice of and attend all hearings. In addition, Act 92 makes other relevant changes to the Children’s Code, for example, clarifying the process for asking the court to disapprove a child’s placement. Our speakers will explain changes to Child in Need of Care law and will also provide information about other new laws that impact our children and families, such as delinquency, education, and mental health laws.

Blues

## Session 403

**Conditions for Removal, Conditions for Return**  
Mark Harris, JD, Renee Spell, JD, & LaTrese LeCour

This session will delve into the critical criteria and considerations that guide the removal of children from their homes and the conditions necessary for their safe return. Participants will gain a thorough understanding of the legal and social frameworks that dictate these decisions, explore best practices for assessment and intervention, and learn strategies to support family reunification. This session aims to equip child welfare professionals, social workers, and legal advocates with the knowledge and tools needed to make informed decisions that prioritize the safety and well-being of children and families.

St. Landry

## Session 404

**Trauma Therapy Reimagined: The Power of Integrating TBRI and TF-CBT**  
Thomas Mitchell, LPC

Integrating Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) with Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) offers a comprehensive approach to addressing the complex needs of children and families who have experienced trauma. TBRI emphasizes building trust and secure relationships through principles of connection, empowerment, and correction, creating a foundation of felt safety and stability. When combined with TF-CBT, an evidence-based treatment focused on processing traumatic memories and developing coping strategies, this integrated approach can enhance therapeutic outcomes. By fostering a nurturing environment and addressing both relational and cognitive-behavioral aspects of trauma survivors, practitioners can more effectively support healing and resilience.

Gospel

## Session 405

**The Normality of Functioning in Dysfunction in the Workplace**  
Dr. Angela White-Bazile, Esq.

Understand, identify, and manage emotional dysregulation among staff in high-stress environments. Participants will learn about the causes and symptoms of emotional dysregulation, its impact on workplace dynamics, and effective strategies to promote emotional well-being and resilience. This session aims to equip managers, supervisors, and team leaders with the knowledge and tools to create a supportive work environment that fosters emotional health and effective stress management.

Cajun



# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Friday November 8, 2024

10:15 am to 12:15 pm



St. Martin

## Session 406

I Do: Foundations in Testimony for the MDT  
Lindsey Dula, National Forensic Interviewing Network

Oftentimes, getting a subpoena may cause a level of nervousness or dread, making you think of escape plans! This training will provide foundational information about testimony, discuss considerations for subpoenas and court appearance recommendations, explore the court preparation process as specific to your professional role, and will review and practice core information commonly needed for testimony.

## Session 407

See Us, Support Us: Recommendations from LGBTQ2S+ Fosters for Providing Affirming Care  
Elena Leomi & Shawna Bulolen-Fairbanks

LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit Fosters are overrepresented in the child welfare system, and many do not have affirming experiences in care. Join Foster Advocates to hear about our human-centered design process with LGBTQ2S+ Fosters in Minnesota, including highlights of Fosters' experiences (from negative, to neutral, to positive) and their recommendations for providing affirming care across child welfare systems. Highlights will include an overview of our LGBTQ2S+ Foster Know Your Rights guide, discussions of best practices around sexual orientation and gender identity data, and our ongoing advocacy journey improving policies and practices within state systems.

Iberia

## Session 408

Using Photography with Families and Children  
Rin Ferraro, Oklahoma University

This training demonstrates how to use the method Photovoice to engage children and families in data collection and/or analysis to increase engagement, collect information on topics challenging to capture with traditional data collection, and promote self-advocacy. With Photovoice, participants take photos representing their perspectives or experiences on pre-defined topics and reflect on each photo's meaning, sharing in group discussions or through writing captions. This lets participants use photography to share challenging and abstract feelings. This method can be especially powerful when working with children and families because they can express and share deep emotions with a wide audience without relying on verbal skills.

Jazz

## Session 409

Mandated Supporting  
Sherrard Crespo, LCSW

When a report to DCFS needs to be made by a mandated supporter, it is important to keep families connected to your support, this workshop will teach tools in having this conversation in a way to strengthen your chance to keep families connected to your care. As mandated reporters when we are working with children and/or families there are times when we will have to make a report of suspicion of abuse or neglect. This training will build skills in how to have this conversation with the parents/guardians in a way to avoid judgement and keep the family connected to the support and care you are providing. Our goal should always be to strengthen families, attend this session to learn how to have this difficult conversation from a place of strength and empathy to keep your families connected to care.

Zydeco

## Session 410

Preventing ACEs - Adverse Childhood Experiences  
Sheri Eastridge

The ACEs Study demonstrated the connection between childhood adversity & health & well-being throughout the lifespan. Increased childhood adversity is associated with an increase in the risk of adverse outcomes in physical health, mental health, and social problems. Parents have the greatest power to prevent childhood adversity, and they deserve to know more about this important driver of public health.

Acadia

# Join us on our official event app!

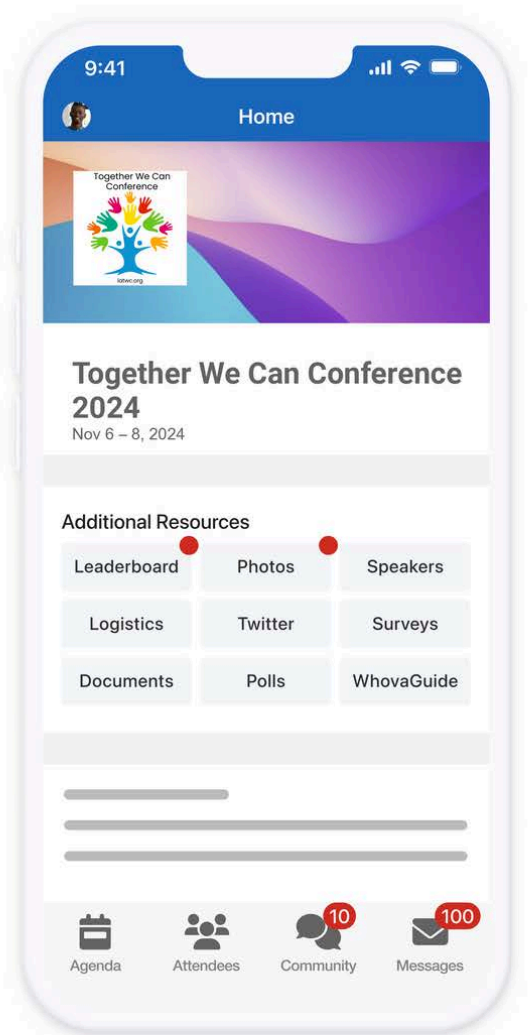
We're using *Whova* as our official event app. Download the app and join our event to:

- ➔ Personalize your agenda
- ➔ Receive event updates and notifications
- ➔ Connect with other attendees
- ➔ Create and join meet-ups



Scan this code for the link or search "Whova - Event and Conference App" on the App Store or Google Play.

Event Invitation Code: kfeizybd0u



## Together We Can Conference

Making a Difference  
for Abused & Neglected Children  
[latwc.org](http://latwc.org)

# DOWNLOAD THE EVENT APP

Use the *Whova* app to maximize your event experience



  
Speaker & attendee profiles

  
In-app messaging

  
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Agenda personalization

  
In-app announcements & Notifications

  
Quick & easy networking



## **Lifetime Achievement Award**

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to thank and honor someone who has dedicated their lives to the improvement of the child well-being and protection for Louisiana's children. This award is not presented annually, but is at the discretion of the steering committee.

**2008 - Chief Justice Pascal Calogero, Louisiana Supreme Court**

**2008 - Lee Ann Vaught, Attorney at Law - Posthumous Award**

**2010 - Donna Cuneo, Louisiana State Bar Foundation**

**2011 - Martha Angelette, Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault -  
Posthumous Award**

**2012 - Chief Justice Kitty Kimball, Louisiana Supreme Court**

**2013 - Judge Nancy Konrad, Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court**

**2015 - Judy Harrison, Louisiana Children's Trust Fund**

**2019 - Judge Anne Simon, Retired**

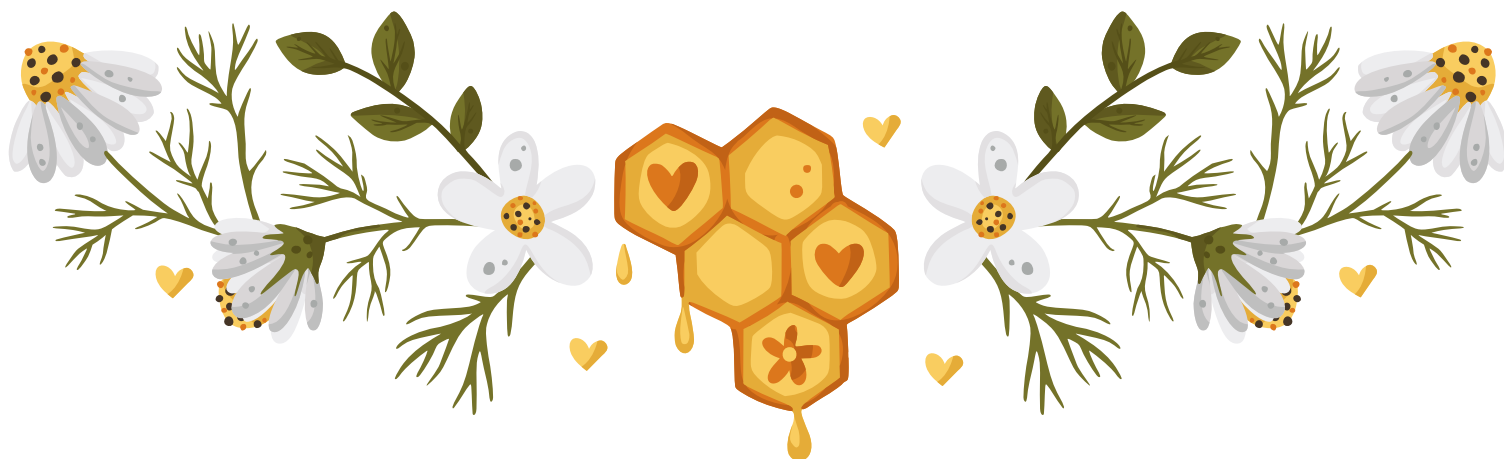
**2019 - Walter Fahr, LCSW**

**2019 - Dot Thibodaux, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren - Posthumous Award**

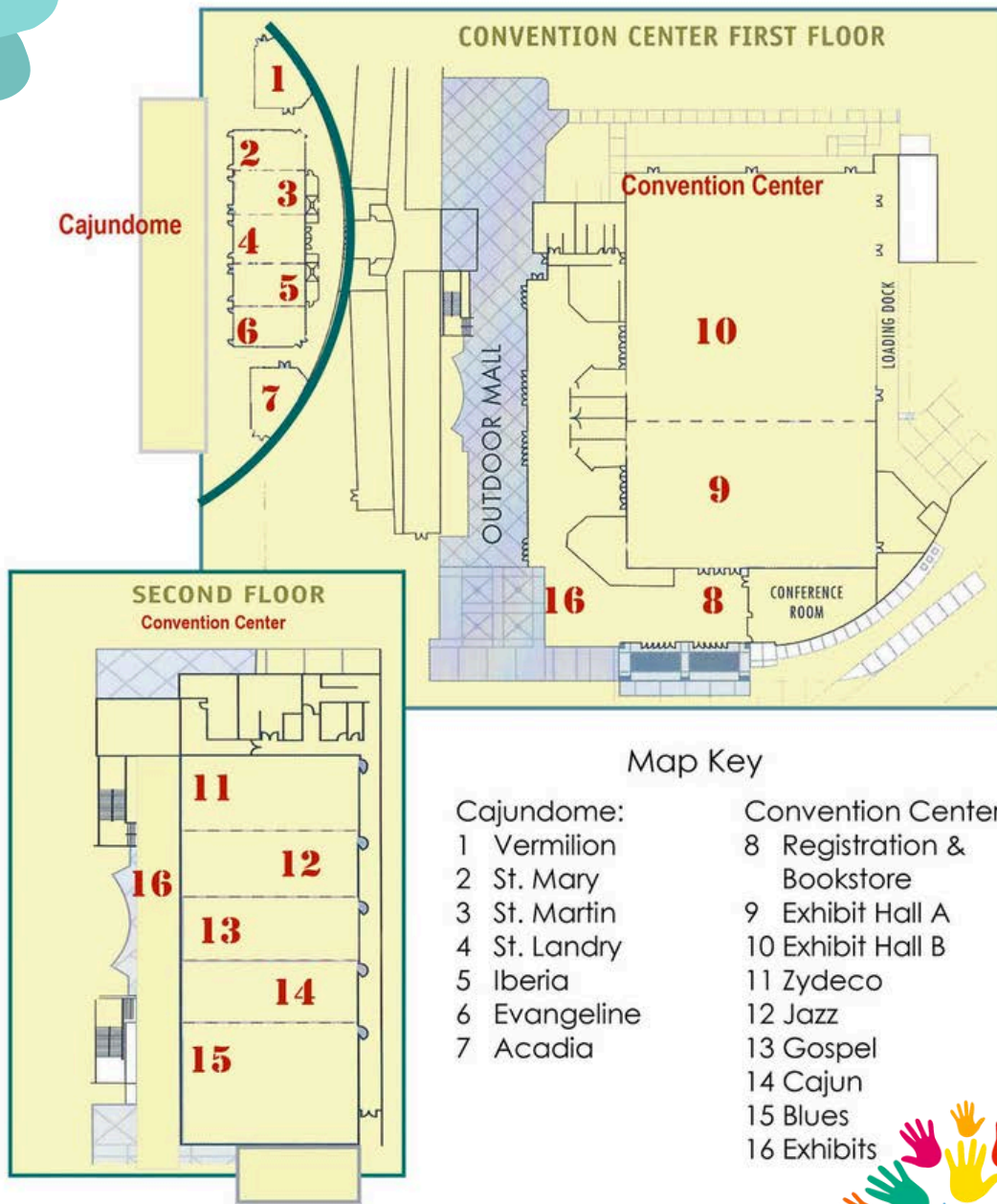
**2020- Marty Gibson, LCSW, Retired DCFS**

**2021 - Judge Ernestine Gray, JD, Retired**

**2021 - Brent Villemarette, LCSW, Retired - Posthumous Award**



# Site Map - Lafayette Cajundome



**Conference Coordination: Team Dynamics**  
<https://teamdyn.com>  
**Conference Website: <https://latwc.org>**  
**985-624-3514**