



NACC Child Welfare Law Specialist Certification Program

Based on the review and recommendation of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Child Welfare and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, the NCJFCJ Board of Directors voted to endorse the National Association of Counsel for Children's (NACC) Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) certification program for judges and attorneys at their July 27, 2019 meeting in Orlando, Florida.

The NACC CWLS certification is a professional achievement that signifies an attorney's specialized knowledge, skill, and verified expertise in the field of child welfare law. The specialization area is defined as "the practice of law representing children, parents or the government in all child protection proceedings including emergency, temporary custody, adjudication, disposition, foster care, permanency planning, termination, guardianship, and adoption. Child Welfare Law does not include representation in private custody and adoption disputes where the state is not a party."

The CWLS certification process is available to attorneys in good standing who have spent the three years preceding application substantially involved in the practice of child welfare law. This includes providing direct representation to children, parents, or governmental agencies. However, NACC may also certify attorneys who have chosen instead to work in this field as judicial officers, law faculty, law firm directors, or policy advocates. The CWLS credential is granted only to those attorneys who successfully complete a rigorous application and examination process. The CWLS certification program was created and sponsored by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau. The program is accredited by the American Bar Association, and endorsed by the Conference of Chief Justices/Conference of State Court Administrators (CCJ/COSCA). NACC also obtains the necessary authorization from state regulatory authorities such as the state court, state bar association, or committee on legal specialization.

The NCJFCJ Board previously endorsed this program in July 2008, and also encouraged the NCJFCJ membership, pursuant to state and court rule, to consider authorization of the program.