



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO SCHOOL OF LAW

Information For Prospective Interns

What is the Children's Advocacy Institute?

The Children's Advocacy Institute (CAI) was founded in 1989 as a part of the Center for Public Interest Law at the USD School of Law. Through its academic component, CAI trains USD Law students to be effective child advocates, and provides three unique clinical opportunities. CAI also trains attorneys to engage in Dependency Court practice through a variety of continuing legal education courses.

In addition to its academic offerings, CAI is one of the nation's preeminent child advocacy law firms. Active at the state and federal levels, CAI strives to promote the health, safety, and well-being of children and youth through legislative and regulatory advocacy, impact litigation, research and public education projects. CAI's professional staff consists of four attorneys in San Diego, one attorney/policy advocate in Sacramento, and one attorney/policy advocate in Washington, D.C.

How can I get involved with CAI and learn about child advocacy?

USD Law students have the unique opportunity to get involved with CAI by participating in CAI's academic program. The first element to CAI's academic program is the substantive course **Child Rights and Remedies**, offered **only in the fall semester**. Taught by Professor Robert Fellmeth, this is a three-unit survey course covering issues, politics, laws and cases impacting the rights of children and youth. Among other things, students study principles in dependency and delinquency law, tort issues relevant to children, and current constitutional issues affecting children's rights.

Second, students who have completed or are taking **Child Rights and Remedies** are eligible to sign up for the **Child Advocacy Clinic**.

What is the Child Advocacy Clinic?

USD's **Child Advocacy Clinic** is one of the few law school programs in the nation that offers law students experience in both representing children in court and working on local, state or national policy issues vital to children's interests. The **Child Advocacy Clinic** offers three clinical opportunities:

(1) **Dependency Clinic**. USD Law students are assigned to work with attorneys from the Dependency Legal Group of San Diego (DLG), and assist these attorneys in the representation of abused and neglected children or their parents in Dependency Court proceedings.

(2) **Delinquency/At-Risk Youth Clinic**. Working under the supervision of attorneys and staff from the San Diego County Public Defender's Juvenile Unit, interns advocate on behalf of delinquent

youth in order to ensure they receive the appropriate educational, mental health, physical health, and other services they need while they are under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. Interns review comprehensive case files of youth to identify areas of need and then advocate on the youth's behalf with regard to issues such as school discipline, special education services, school placement, mental health assessments and services, and health care needs, in order to protect the youth's rights with regard to those matters and to address underlying issues that might be contributing to the youth's delinquency.

(3) **Policy Clinic.** law students work with CAI professional staff on current advocacy projects, such as state and federal legislative or regulatory advocacy, impact litigation, legal research, or public education projects. Policy Clinic students can also work with CAI's Homeless Youth Outreach Project or serve as Educational Representatives for at-risk youth.

What would I do in the Dependency Clinic?

- Students in the Dependency Clinic are assigned to work with experienced DLG attorneys, and assist those attorneys in the representation of children or parents in Dependency Court, where all decisions are made as to the legal rights of children who are found to be abused or neglected. Dependency Clinic students are exposed to a wide variety of experiences, such as interviewing clients and witnesses; presenting evidence during bench trials; preparing briefs and memoranda; participating in settlement conferences; conducting field work with investigators; and making court appearances as necessary and appropriate.
- **PLEASE NOTE: Students in the Dependency Clinic must clear their class schedules so they have 16 hours each week available to work with their supervising attorneys.** In addition to working 16 hours per week with their DLG attorneys, interns in the Dependency Clinic meet as a group once per week for a one-hour classroom component. The day/time of the classroom component for the Dependency Clinic is set at a time that is mutually convenient for all Dependency Clinic interns.
- Students interested in participating in the Dependency Clinic must be enrolled in or have completed Evidence and Civil Procedure, in addition to Child Rights and Remedies. The Dependency Clinic, which is offered in both the Fall and Spring semesters, is a 4-unit clinic.

What would I do in the Delinquency/At-Risk Youth Clinic?

- Students in the Delinquency/At Risk Youth Clinic advocate on behalf of delinquent youth in order to ensure they receive the appropriate educational, mental health, physical health, and other services they need while they are under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. Interns review comprehensive case files of youth to identify areas of need and then advocate on the youth's behalf with regard to issues such as school discipline, special education services, school placement, mental health assessments and services, and health care needs, in order to protect the youth's rights with regard to those matters and to address underlying issues that might be contributing to the youth's delinquency.
- **PLEASE NOTE: Students in the Delinquency/At-Risk Youth Clinic must clear their class schedules so they have 20 hours each week available to work at the Public Defender's**

Office. In addition to working 20 hours each week at the Public Defender's Office, interns in the Delinquency/At-Risk Youth Clinic meet as a group once per week for a one-hour classroom component. The day/time of the classroom component for the Delinquency Clinic is set at a time that is mutually convenient for all Delinquency Clinic interns.

- It is recommended that students interested in taking the Delinquency/At Risk Youth Clinic be enrolled in or have completed Child Rights and Remedies and the Education and Disability Clinic. The Delinquency/At Risk Youth Clinic, which is offered in both the Fall and Spring semesters, is a 4-unit clinic.

What would I do in the Policy Clinic?

- The Policy Clinic offers students a chance to pursue a research, writing, and/or advocacy project on a variety of issues, such as foster care, children's health care, juvenile justice, education, etc. These projects include petitioning an agency to adopt regulations, drafting model legislation (or conducting research relevant to pending legislation), researching and writing on child-related issues, or participating in impact litigation, among other things. Students are also able to serve as Educational Representatives for at-risk youth and/or assist CAI's Homeless Youth Outreach Project.
- The Policy Clinic, which is offered in both the Fall and Spring semesters, can be taken for 1, 2, or 3 units. Each unit of credit equates to a minimum of 4 hours of work per week (e.g., taking the Policy Clinic for 3 units would require 12 hours of work per week).

How do I sign up for Child Rights and Remedies?

Child Rights and Remedies is offered only in the fall semester. To take the course in Fall 2013, you must preregister for it. **Child Rights and Remedies** is a prerequisite to participation in the Child Advocacy Clinic.

How do I sign up for Child Advocacy Clinic?

1. Make sure you have either completed Child Rights and Remedies or are signed up for it for the Fall 2013 semester.
2. Complete the attached "Child Advocacy Clinic Application" and bring it to CAI Administrative Director Elisa Weichel at the CAI offices (rear door of the Legal Research Center) as soon as possible.
3. Once you turn in your Application, and if there is space available in the Clinic of your choice, CAI Administrative Director Elisa Weichel will give you a permission slip which you will give to the Records Office in order to register for the Clinic.

How can I get more information?

Contact Robert Fellmeth or Elisa Weichel for more information. Feel free to visit them at CAI's offices (located at the rear entrance of the Legal Research Center), email them at cpil@sandiego.edu (Prof. Fellmeth) or eweichel@sandiego.edu (Elisa), or call them at (619) 260-4806. More information about CAI can also be obtained on our website — www.caichildlaw.org.

**Children's Advocacy Institute
CHILD ADVOCACY CLINIC
APPLICATION**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PREFERRED PHONE: _____

PREFERRED EMAIL: _____

1. My expected month/year of graduation is (month/year) _____/_____.

2. I completed *Child Rights and Remedies* in Fall _____ or
 I will be enrolled in *Child Rights and Remedies* in Fall _____.

3. I prefer to participate in the:

_____ Policy Clinic

_____ Dependency Clinic

_____ Delinquency/At Risk Youth Clinic

4. I am interested in the Child Advocacy Clinic because:

**Please complete this form and return it to CAI Administrative Director
Elisa Weichel in the CAI offices (rear entrance of the LRC). THANK YOU!**