

# The Third National Judicial Leadership Summit on The Protection of Children

*Many Things We Need Can Wait—A Child Cannot*

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) will sponsor the Third National Judicial Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children on October 15-17, 2009. Summit III will be held in Austin, Texas, hosted by the Texas courts and the Texas Permanent Judicial Commission on Children, Youth, and Families. It will build on the success of the 2005 and 2007 Summits in Minnesota and New York by:



- Sustaining the commitment of the judicial and child welfare agency leadership to view the child protection process “Through the Eyes of a Child”
- Updating the action plans prepared at the previous Summits by each state team
- Highlighting successful approaches and promising practices for:
  - Championing improvements in the quality, effectiveness, and timeliness of decisions in cases affecting the well-being of children
  - Broadening collaboration
  - Sharing data
  - Measuring performance and success
  - Enhancing interstate cooperation and communication
  - Addressing children’s needs in rural as well as urban jurisdictions
  - Providing competent legal representation to children and parents



*Children are stuck in a system that was designed for adults. It's come down to a belief that we need to look at the system through the eyes of a child.*

Hon. William Byars, Jr.  
Keynote Address, First National Judicial  
Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children

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Summit III will also provide the opportunity to broaden the scope of collaboration beyond the leadership of the courts and child protection agencies to include state education agency leaders. It will address issues that have emerged and practices that have expanded rapidly since the March 2007 Summit, such as:

- How to address the disproportionate number of minority children in the child protection system
- How best to ensure continuity of education when children are placed in foster care and subsequently returned to their home
- How to safely reduce the number of children in foster care
- How best to ensure that youth who age out of foster care have the requisite vocational skills to enable them to find jobs and support themselves

Summit III has been strongly endorsed by the Joint Committee on Courts, Children, and Families of the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators. The President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges has expressed that organization's willingness to again partner in the effort. The two-day program will include individual and panel presentations, sets of concurrent workshops, and opportunities for the state teams to meet and update the action plans. Following the Summit, NCSC will produce and broadly distribute a summary report titled "A Renewed Call to Action" and provide information and technical assistance to encourage and facilitate implementation of the state action plans.



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Some images courtesy of the National CASA Association

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