

# DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCATES



## Adoption & Child Welfare Law Fellowship at Capital University Law School

Make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children forever  
Invest in a Fellow today

Each year, our nation's child welfare systems serve more than 900,000 children because of abuse, neglect or family misfortune. Of the half million children living in foster care, 114,000 are waiting for families to adopt them. For these children, the goal of stability and permanency is hampered by systemic issues including heavy caseloads and delays in court proceedings. More competent and knowledgeable legal professionals are needed to help address these issues and to advocate for families, children, and child-serving agencies who come before our nation's child and family courts.

**Well-trained, highly qualified child advocates**, agency counsel, government attorneys, and juvenile judges can **make all the difference** between a youth's successful transition into adulthood and a youth's continued struggle in the system.<sup>1</sup>

### A SNAPSHOT OF OUR NATION'S AT-RISK KIDS & YOUTH

Nearly **900,000** children per year have confirmed cases of abuse or neglect<sup>2</sup>

Over **500,000** children are placed temporarily in foster care due to parental abuse or neglect

An abused or neglected child is **53% more likely to be arrested as a youth** and **38% more likely to commit a violent crime**<sup>3</sup>

Approximately **20,000** foster care teenagers leave the system each year **without permanent families**

Within 2 to 4 years of these youths leaving foster care<sup>4</sup>:

- More than **50% had not graduated** from high school
- **1 in 4 had become homeless**
- **84%** had become parents
- **Only 2%** had gone on to obtain bachelor degrees

Successful outcomes and futures for these children and youth are dependent on talented and dedicated legal professionals acting in all capacities within our child welfare and juvenile justice systems.



<sup>1</sup> National Resource Center for Youth Development 2004 *Improving Outcomes for Older Youth: What judges and attorneys need to know*

<sup>2</sup> Children's Defense Fund, March 2008

<sup>3</sup> Prevent Child Abuse New York 2003 *The Costs of Child Abuse and the Urgent Need for Prevention*

<sup>4</sup> National Foster Care Coalition Website Facts

# WHY THE ADOPTION & CHILD WELFARE LAW FELLOWSHIP?

**“The number one barrier to effective representation is inadequate training — this is especially true for children’s representatives.”** *2004 Pew Commission Report*

## A DEMANDING PROFESSION THAT REQUIRES WELL-TRAINED ATTORNEYS

- According to a study by the American Bar Association, **one of the major systemic barriers to attracting and keeping talented lawyers** in the child welfare field is the **lack of practice-specific training, both at the law school and practice levels.**
- According to a Pew Commission report, many children and parents in the foster care system never receive adequate, timely and consistent legal representation.

## TALENTED LAW STUDENTS ARE NEEDED & YOUR SUPPORT IS CRITICAL

- Across the country, high student loan debt, large caseloads, and under-compensation discourage attorneys from entering or remaining in this field. As a result, the child welfare sector experiences high attorney turnover and increased professional burnout.
- **The return on your investment in a Fellowship will be significant both to the quality of the profession and the financial future of the Fellow.** Today’s law school student graduates on average with \$76,000 in loans. Your contribution to a Fellow’s \$15,000 scholarship will save that student at least \$37,500 in loan repayment after graduation.

Capital University Law School and the National Center for Adoption Law & Policy are proud to offer a competitive Fellowship in the area of adoption and child welfare law to train future law students in this demanding practice field.



### ADOPTION & CHILD WELFARE LAW FELLOWSHIP

Adoption and child welfare law encompass a wide range of challenging aspects, such as complicated issues in parental rights and wrongful adoption and systemic issues impacting the hundreds of thousands of children who are in foster care. Qualified and well-trained attorneys are needed to better advocate for these children, families, and child-serving agencies. As one of the nation’s few law schools to offer a concentration in child and family law and courses in adoption and child welfare law, this Fellowship was created at Capital to address this critical area of need.

Fellowship Benefits: \$5,000 annual academic merit scholarship, funded summer work opportunities, paid faculty research assistantship, and conference stipends

*The Fellowship Program is administered and supported by the National Center for Adoption Law & Policy  
Learn more about this Fellowship at [www.law.capital.edu/ncalpfellowships](http://www.law.capital.edu/ncalpfellowships)*

**This Fellowship advances Capital University Law School’s strategic plan and the mission of the National Center for Adoption Law & Policy (NCALP)**

- It encourages the pursuit of public interest work and pro bono service while also promoting a law school community committed to philanthropy.
- It enhances the Law School’s growing reputation as a leader in child and family law and attracts top students interested in these practice areas.
- It is an essential component of NCALP’s commitment to training current and future attorneys so that they have the skills and tools necessary to help children, families, and child-serving agencies.