2021 Virtual Conference

THE 28TH ANNUAL

Children's Law Institute

Rising to the Challenge: Revolutionizing Practice

January 13–15th, 2021

Final Report: Executive Summary

NM Court Improvement Project

Prepared by the NMSU Center of Innovation for Behavioral Health and Wellbeing,
New Mexico State University, Department of Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

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Introduction

The 28th Annual New Mexico Children's Law Institute (CLI) was held virtually from Wednesday, January 13th through Friday, January 15th, 2021. For twenty-eight years, the Children's Law Institute has focused on new and emerging trends and best practices in ever changing child welfare and juvenile justice environments. Through the CLI, the child welfare and juvenile justice communities have successfully advocated for blending systems and preserving connections. Together the CLI community has learned the importance of a trauma-informed approach, acquired skills for enhancing practice, and deepened its service to children and youth by focusing on empathy and compassion.

This year's conference included 44 unique workshops that provided attendees an opportunity to reflect on how to embrace change and revolutionize their practice. The conference encouraged all providers to rise to the challenge and revolutionize their practice. The conference planning committee made the decision to hold the conference virtually and utilize the web-based version of the CrowdCompass event app to assist attendees in navigating the conference program and used Zoom as the online platform to host conference sessions. Overall attendees were satisfied with the ease of access to the virtual event.

The 2021 CLI offered four featured speaker presentations by Dr. Kaitlan Baston, Mary Katherine Nagel, Judge Lynn Tepper, and Kristin Henning, that covered the neurobiology of substance use in pregnant and parenting women, tribal advocacy and the Indian Child Welfare Act, how to see individuals in a courtroom through a trauma lens, and race, adolescence and trauma in family court. Other workshop topics included being a Black foster youth in America, engaging and empowering youth involved in child welfare proceedings, collaborating effectively with tribes, and merging science with legal strategy when advocating for children and families. Other workshops promoted diversity and inclusion through topics related to black invisibility, cultural humility, community engagement, and working with LGBTQ+ youth. Our skill building workshops included topics related to wellness and resiliency, mindfulness, trauma informed practices, and building awareness around kinship care. Three workshops, led by youth, spoke to the experience of youth and recommendations regarding youth services. Opening keynote speaker, Dr. Christina Bethell, discussed her research linking child well-being to safe, stable, nurturing relationships. The closing keynote speaker, Brittany Packnett Cunningham, inspired participants during a fireside-style chat with Cynthia Chavers, Field Deputy Director with CYFD Protective Services Division, and shared lessons of confidence through change learned from her work as an activist, educator, and leader. Conference attendees had the opportunity for rest and rejuvenation in mindfulness sessions held during the morning breaks. During the lunch break participants were invited to connect with other attendees and discuss common experiences during facilitated Community Conversations. During the afternoon breaks, participants had the opportunity to move and dance during facilitated "Zoomba" sessions. For a full list of session topics, descriptions and speakers visit the "Agenda" tab at the conference website, link provided on page 13.

The Children's Law Institute is a multi-agency and organization collaboration, led by the Court Improvement Project of the NM Supreme Court. The annual conference was planned and coordinated by the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts, the Center of Innovation for Behavioral Health and Wellbeing at New Mexico State University and the UNM Institute of Public Law, Corinne Wolfe Center for Child and Family Justice. Major contributors to the planning process include the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department's Divisions of Juvenile Justice, Protective Services, and Behavioral Health; The Substitute Care Advisory Council; the NM Family Advocacy Program and representatives of the court including contract attorneys, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and State and Tribal Judges. Major financial sponsorship of the 2021 CLI was from the NM Supreme Court, The Children's Justice Act Advisory Group and the New Mexico State Bar, Children's Law Section. For a complete list of financial sponsors for this year's conference, see page 13.

2021 Conference Attendance

This year, **1,190** participants registered for the conference with **1,135** in attendance. The breakdown of persons registering and attending, as well as those responding to the evaluation survey follows.

2021 Registration

Registration by category:

Total Registered: 1,190

Registration Breakdown by Payment Category:

Judge: 40

Attorney: 117

Professional: 833

Volunteer/Foster Parents: 106

Youth: 12

Presenters Only: 53

Other Registration Information:

Total Registered Presenters: 53

CLI Scholarships: 21

CLI Volunteers: 4

Registration by Position (self-report):

*Registrants were asked to select up the Job Role that best described them, responses below will total more than the **1,190** total registrants.*

CASA (Staff & Volunteer)-117	CYFD – PS Children's Court Attorney-44	Medical: MD/RN/Other-2	Substitute Care Advisory Council (Staff and Volunteers)- 15
Contract Attorney (GAL, YA, RA)-49	Educator – 13	Parent/Family Member - 4	Therapist/Counselor/Social Worker-65
CYFD Administrator-14	Family Peer Support Worker-26	Public Defender-0	Tribal Court Judge-9
CYFD-Early Childhood Staff-1	Foster Parent/Adoptive Parent-11	Service Provider - 77	Wraparound Facilitator-7
CYFD-Behavioral Health Services-39	Law Enforcement-0	State of NM Judge-31	Youth-16
CYFD-Juvenile Justice Staff/Juvenile Probation Officer-65	Presenter-	School Social Worker - 55	Youth Support Life Skills Coach-8
CYFD-Protective Services Staff-310	Other-111	Student - 6	

Attendance breakdown by Conference Session:

The following is estimated attendance based on CLI staff headcount during the Zoom sessions.

Title	Presenters	Estimated Attendance
Opening Session, January 13th 8:00am – 9:30am		
Welcome & Opening Keynote Presentation - We Are the Medicine: Leveraging the Power of Relationships and Engagement to Nurture Developing Minds	Dr. Christina Bethell	**980**
Break 9:30am – 10:00am: Mindfulness Practice	Liz Bennett	
Workshop Session One, January 13th 10:00am – 11:30am		
Using Science to Drive Practice: Understanding the Neurobiology of Substance Use in Pregnant and Parenting Women	Kaitlan Baston, MD, MSC	**170**
The same system that said would save us, played us!: Being a Black foster youth in America	Demontea Thompson and Dr. Deshunna Ricks	**182**
Creating Protective Communities for Youth	Alena Schaim and Jess Clark	**282**
Psychotropic Medications & Foster Youth: Approaches and Resources to Advocate for Youth	Jean Strout, Sarah Pauter, and Alyssa Davis	**293**
From Lived Experience to Peer Mentorship: Parent Panel Discussion	Leslie Jones, Parent Panel	**190**
Workshop Session Two, January 13th 1:30pm - 3:00pm		
Tribal Advocacy and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)	Mary Kathryn Nagel	**297**
Effective (Remote!) Advocacy and Trial Preparation in Cases Requiring Expert Testimony	Rachel Brewer and Lyz Melendez	**183**
Practice Change at a JDAI site: Using Quality Service Review for Practice Change at Bernalillo County Detention Center	Dr. Kate Gibbons and Carmela Romero	**52**
Judges Session: Update on Kinship, Guardianship in New Mexico		**30**
Beyond blue and pink: Supporting Children to Embrace the Possibilities of Gender	Jess Clark and Adrien Lawyer	**280**
Update on Covid Related Federal Policy and Procedure Changes in Child welfare	Prudence Beidler Carr	**210**
Break 3:00pm-3:30pm: ZOOMBA	Jessica Sánchez Romero	**114**
Workshop Session Three, January 13th 3:30pm – 5:00pm		
Awaiting Reunification during Covid-19 Lock-Down: Understanding the Parent Perspective	Dr. Linda M. Callejas	**123**
Implementing the Kevin S. Settlement Agreement; Building a Trauma-Responsive System of Care for All Children in State Custody	Sara Crecca with co-presenters Gary Housepian, George Davis, and Therese Yanan	**280**
A Youth's Journey Through a Year of Change	Joseph Garcia and Crystil Rosas	**140**
Representation of young people; understanding youth rights in New Mexico, barriers to representation, consent, and confidentiality.	Mariel Willow and Bette Fleishman	**158**
Identifying & Assisting Survivors of Human Trafficking with a Focus on the Experience of Children and Immigrant Survivors of Human Trafficking	Lauren Keenan	**300**
Workshop Session Four, January 14th 8:00am-9:30pm		
Integrating Restorative Practices and Social Emotional Learning to Support Youth and Those who Work With Them	Jeff Newcomer Miller and Adriana Kerr	**250**
Engaging & Empowering Youth Involved in Child Welfare Proceedings	Chris Henderson, Cara Nord, Tori Shuler	**142**
Partnering with Domestic Violence Survivors	David Mandel	**190**

Collaborating With Tribes in Effectively Using the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to Support Indian Children and Families	Donalyn Sarracino	**147**
Beyond Due Process: Parental Rights After A Child's Removal	Emily Peeler, Esiena Ekwofia, and Hope Newton	**274**
Break 9:30am – 10:00am: Mindfulness Practice	Liz Bennett	
Workshop Session Five, January 14th 10:00am – 11:30am		
Seeing Individuals Through A Trauma Lens: The Revolution Begins	Judge Lynn Tepper	**580**
Better Together: Building Blocks to Successful Partnerships	Meryl Levine and Kara Georgi	**87**
Creating and Maintaining Effective Community Collaboration in a Virtual Space	Kayla Strickler, Monica Ly, Andrew Salazar, Marissa Vigil, Lori Otero, and Kira Luna	**117**
Bridging Cultural Humility and Language in Direct Practice	Brenda Quiñonez, LCSW, and Kee Straits, PhD	**140**
Supporting Youth With Disabilities a Navigating a Culture of Ableism	Alena Schaim	**142**
Bringing the Data to Life: Data as a Tool for Parent Representation	Cristina F. Freitas and Debbie Freitas	**87**
Workshop Session Six, January 14th 1:30pm – 3:00pm		
Why do Attorneys DO That?	Cristen Conley, Brian Ray, Erinna Atkins, Mary McQueeny, and Therese Yanan	**152**
Examination and Implications of ACEs among youth in the NM JJS; Prevention and Intervention as Health Justice and Equity	Andrew Hsi, Sarah Steadman, Lori Zigich, and George Davis	**277**
Encouraging and highlighting the Progress and Possibilities of Youth Advocacy - Youth WKSHP	Ingrid Palmer	**18**
Litigating Race: A discussion on using legal tools and resources to combat implicit racial bias in child welfare and juvenile proceedings	Shomari Ward	**219**
Conducting Trauma-Informed Interviews of Children	Warren Binford, Michael Bochenek, Alan Shapiro, and Ewen Wang	**300**
Break 3:00pm – 3:30pm: ZOOMBA	Jessica Sánchez Romero	**68**
Workshop Session Seven, January 14th 3:00pm – 5:00pm		
Perceptions of Policing: Race, Adolescence and Trauma in the Family Court	Kristin Nicole Henning	**339**
Reducing Short Stays to Better Support Families	Arika Sanchez, Micaela Baca, and Andrew Salazar	**126**
Meaningful Family Time Visitation with Infants and Toddlers in Child Welfare	Dr. Joy Osofsky	**179**
Special Considerations for Representing Non-Citizen Families in Dependency Proceedings: the Overlap Between Child Welfare and Immigration Law	Danny Alicea, and Sara Lewis	**149**
Building a New Portfolio - Widening our Lens to Actualize the Paradigm Shift in Child Welfare.	Brooke Tafoya	**180**
Special Live Musical Performance by: Papayas con Chile		
Workshop Session Eight, January 15th 8:00am – 9:30am		
Brain Essentials: Merging Science with Advocacy to Give Children and Families "What They Need" Instead of "What We Got"	J. Robert Lowenbach	**287**
Essential Components of the Individualize Education Plan (IEP)	Paola Santana, Jenn Donelli, and Victoria Chavez	**196**
Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption: Brave Conversations on Parental Loss & Effective Holistic Advocacy	Heather Wilson	**292**
The upEND movement	Dr. Alan Dettlaff	**172**
Break 9:30am – 10:00am: Mindfulness Practice	Liz Bennett	
Closing Session, January 15th 10:00am-12:30pm		
Confidence Through Change	**Brittany Packnett Cunningham**	**907**

Overall Conference Evaluation Report

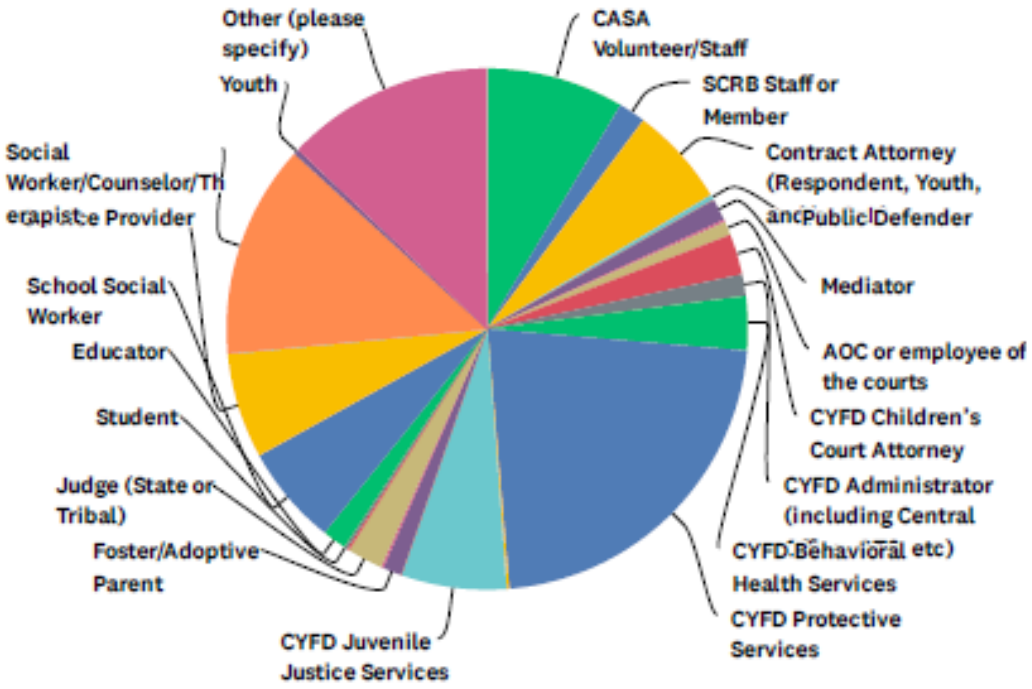
All attendees of the 2021 CLI Conference were sent an email with the online satisfaction survey on **January 19, 2021**. The survey was available until **January 27, 2021**. Of the **1,135** participants at the conference, **610** responded to the survey. Participants were asked to identify what sessions they attended and answer a set of questions about each session each on a 5-point scale where 1 is low and 5 is high. Narrative feedback about each session was also collected. The responses about the general conference and overall feedback are summarized below. Responses about Keynote and Workshop sessions is provided to the individual presenters of those sessions and CLI planning committee members and may be provided to others upon special request.

Participant Satisfaction Survey Respondent Profile

Participants were asked to provide six ratings on four-point scale of the conference overall.

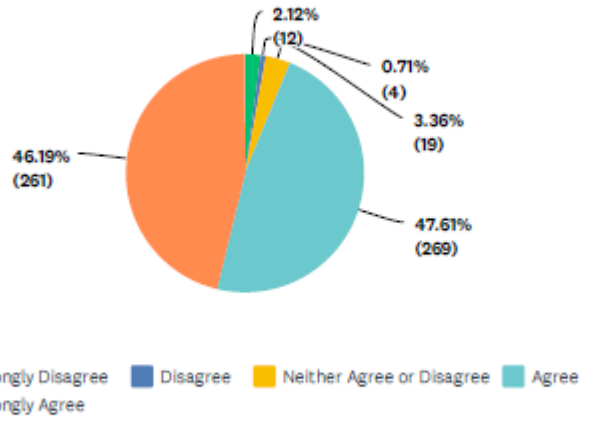
Q1 We would like to begin by asking you to select the category of participant that best fits you. Please select from the following:

Answered: 596 Skipped: 14



Q6 I learned new information that will inform my work with children, youth, and families.

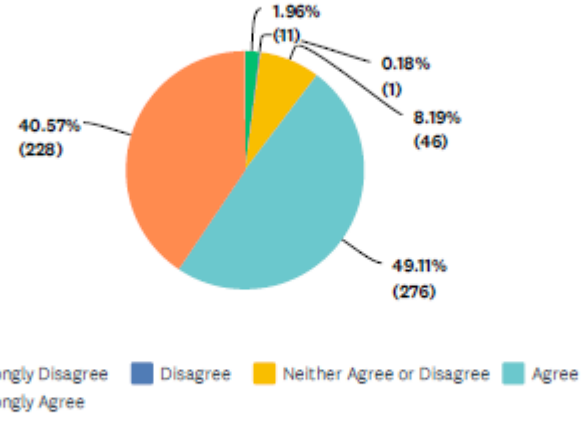
Answered: 565 Skipped: 45



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.12% 12	0.71% 4	3.36% 19	47.61% 269	46.19% 261	565	4.35

Q7 I learned new skills or gained new ideas that I will immediately apply to my work.

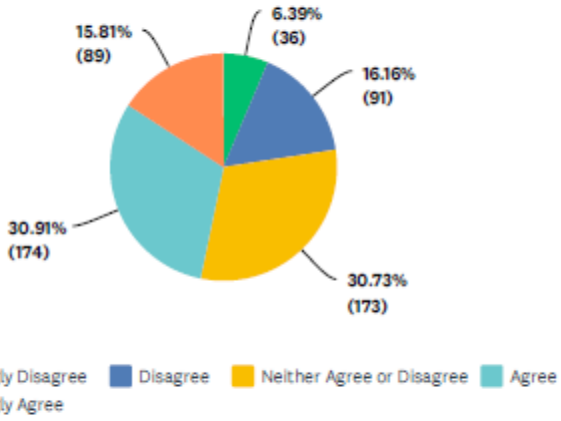
Answered: 562 Skipped: 48



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	1.96% 11	0.18% 1	8.19% 46	49.11% 276	40.57% 228	562	4.26

Q8 I met new people, or reconnected with people, with whom I can work collaboratively in the future.

Answered: 563 Skipped: 47



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	6.39% 36	16.16% 91	30.73% 173	30.91% 174	15.81% 89	563	3.34

Q9 The conference allowed me to connect with colleagues I don't usually interact with.

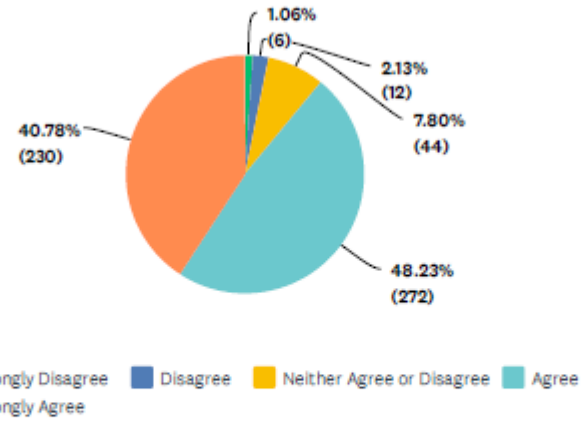
Answered: 529 Skipped: 81

ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	50	26,464	529
Total Respondents: 529			

On a scale of 1-100, Average number: 50

Q10 Overall, the CLI met my expectations.

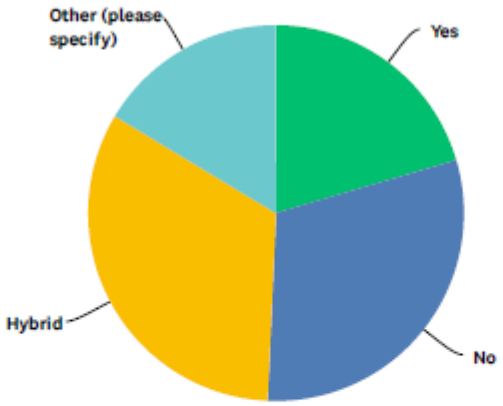
Answered: 564 Skipped: 46



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	1.06% 6	2.13% 12	7.80% 44	48.23% 272	40.78% 230	564	4.26

Q13 I think CLI should stay virtual

Answered: 562 Skipped: 48



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.46%	115
No	30.25%	170
Hybrid	32.92%	185
Other (please specify)	16.37%	92
TOTAL		562

Overall Conference Narrative Feedback Summary

Overall Organization of the Event

Overall, most respondents felt very positively about the organization and implementation of the conference. Many participants noted that the conference was highly informative, inspiring, and well planned. While participants missed the face to face interactions, they believed the virtual conference was a suitable alternative. The opening and closing sessions were greatly appreciated by many surveyed.

Some respondents suggested clearer written instructions be provided about registration, accessing sessions and handouts, and indicating a clear email or point of contact for people who had CEU questions, technical issues, or other inquiries. Others felt that the schedule was too difficult to maintain virtually as it is a long time to sit in front of a computer. Some suggested shortening the length of sessions, reducing the length of the conference day, starting later in the day, or having more opportunities for breaks. The majority of respondents agreed that the digital conference interface was easy to navigate and were interested in attending additional virtual trainings or conferences in the future.

Speaker and Workshop Content

The majority of survey respondents had positive feedback about the quality, speaker and topic variety, and structuring of the workshop sessions. Many responses indicated that the presentations they attended were educational, relevant, and informative.

Some survey responses expressed a desire for more intermediate or advanced topic material choices as many sessions were somewhat introductory. Some respondents expressed a desire for more New Mexico centered information as many presenters were speaking from experience in urban, densely populated areas with different demographics. A few respondents also expressed concern about the number of breakout rooms used as participation was often low and took time away from meaningful discussion in the main presentation room. A few participants mentioned the need for more cross-cultural, diverse perspectives among presenters.

Technology

Participants had varying opinions about navigating the digital interface and ease of use of the Crowd Compass and Zoom apps. Many respondents expressed satisfaction with the platforms used, found them easy to navigate, or commented about the great support they received from IT support. Others appreciated that the digital conference eliminated travel time and expenses and felt that the digital environment allowed them to be more focused on the presentations as there were no audience or environmental distractions.

Other participants expressed that they had many technical difficulties and found it challenging to navigate the web applications required for the conference. Some had difficulty signing up for sessions, logging in to Crowd Compass with the verification code, logging in to zoom rooms, or locating and downloading PowerPoint slides and handouts. Some respondents noted that while they understood the necessity of a digital conference this year, they missed the in-person interaction and networking opportunities existing in previous years.

Common Topic Suggestions for Future Conferences

- Trauma Informed Care practices
- Updated Indian Child Welfare Act information
- Impact of COVID-19 on mental health, children, and families
- Racial equity and combatting systemic inequalities
- Legal updates/changes to New Mexico law
- Preventing staff-turn over and improving service continuity
- Special Education topics
- LGBTQ topics
- Motivational Interviewing
- Community strengthening tools
- New Mexico's children's safety network
- Transgender children and custody/legal issues
- Restorative Justice
- Parent and peer support mentorship
- Substance Abuse
- Keeping children out of foster care
- Visitation rights and custody issues
- A state of the Nation discussion
- State and Federal legislative priorities and how to engage with them
- Innovations in Telehealth
- Role of law enforcement in mental health
- Ending sexual exploitation of children
- Adoption topics
- Strategies to alleviate frontline worker fatigue

2021 CLI Sponsors

Gold Level Sponsors

Child Welfare Information Gateway

Responsible Sex Education Institute

Silver Level Sponsors

Copper Hills Youth Center

NM Family Advocacy Program

New Mexico Friends of Foster Children

MCH Family Outreach

Pegasus Legal Services for Children

Relay New Mexico

University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability Information Network

Bronze Level Sponsors

National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

View the Detailed Conference Program Here:

https://web.cvent.com/event/66ff6f47-6160-42a8-bdb2-9be3726cc6bb/summary