

2024 Report of the Family Law Committee

The Family Law committee met bi-monthly by way of brown bag lunch meetings. All meetings are open to anyone who wants to come. Typically the meetings address any significant changes in family law matters and then the floor is open to any discussion or topics members would like to raise.

Of note, in 2024 we had a guest speaker, Dr. Denise Feger from Crossroads Counseling, who discussed with us some of the issues counselors are seeing with families going through the court system and how attorneys and the courts can work with counselors early on in the process.

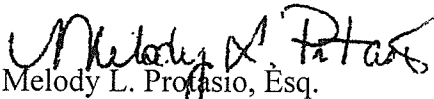
The committee also discussed how custody trials would be conducted with our bench based upon each Judge's preferences: Judge Linhardt preferring half day trials (primarily for pro se individuals) and Judge Gardner preferred to utilize the back-up trial system.

A significant change in family law was the passing of Kayden's law, which took effect in August 2024. The new law requires courts to apply weighted consideration to factors that directly impact the well-being and safety of the child. Overall, Kayden's Law creates a higher bar for granting unsupervised custody to parents when there's a history of abuse and/or ongoing risk of violence. The family bar discussed how this would impact custody conferences when there were Protection From Abuse orders or other history/allegations of violence.

The family bar also decided to reword the standard provisions in the custody orders so that they are easier for non-lawyers to understand. After much effort by Diane Turner who drafted the changes, the committee discussed the proposed changes and modifications to streamline the legal custody and general parental obligations. The new language has gone into effect and is now being used in newly generated custody orders.

Thank you to Judge Gardner who is our family law Judge and has worked diligently to prepare the agendas and topics for each meeting and thank you to all who have attended and participated in the meetings.

Respectfully Submitted,


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Family Law Committee Chair