



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: February 3, 2016
Contact: Max Cortes, Court Administrator
Phone: (775) 283-7249
Fax: (775) 887-2272
Email: MCortes@carson.org

First Judicial District Court - Juvenile Court Division Undergoes Trauma Audit

The Juvenile Court which handles juvenile delinquency cases, cases involving the protection of children, and child support cases, agreed to be audited by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) in July of 2015. The purpose of the audit is to assist the court in creating a trauma-responsive environment, develop and implement best practices and policies. The final version of the audit report is anticipated to be released in early 2016.

The audit consisted of NCJFC staff conducting a pre-survey of the stakeholders which consisted of attorneys, parents, guardians, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services' caseworkers and supervisors, probation officers, security and correction officers, court staff and the Juvenile Court Special Master. A majority of the stakeholders indicated that they had never participated in an audit of this nature. However, a majority of them (63.6%) believed that at least 75% of their clients had experienced a traumatic event. 86% of the stakeholders agreed that implementing trauma-informed practices will improve the well-being of children and families in their jurisdiction and 100% agreed that it is important for staff to periodically update their knowledge regarding trauma.

After review of the preliminary audit, District Court Judges James T. Russell and Judge James E. Wilson, Jr., praised Juvenile Court Special Master Kimberly Okezie and her staff on their professionalism and dedication to assisting the public. "Coming to court can be inherently stressful for adults, juveniles, and young children. We applaud the efforts to implement best practices and policies to reduce any trauma or stress and fully support the implementation of the recommendations."

Over the course of two-days, site visit activities involved observation and evaluation of court facilities, including safety, signage, child-friendliness, noise level, lighting, temperature, cleanliness, courtroom, waiting and parking areas. The Murphy-Bernardini Regional Juvenile Detention Center was also toured.

Recommendations were made that consisted of providing reading materials for both adults and children, a small selection of toys/stuffed animals in the waiting area for children, monitoring and controlling the building temperature, installing changing tables in the restrooms, soundproofing or addressing the noise level in the waiting areas, installing cushions for the courtroom benches, and providing specialized trauma training for employees who assist the public and to assist employees to reduce their own levels of stress.

END