



Empowering families with high-quality legal representation

Issue 8 – July 2026

Director's Message: Family Time, Not Visitation

For many families, summer is a season of connection. It's backyard cookouts, trips to the park or splash pad, family reunions, basketball games at the local court, and kids playing outside with friends until the sun goes down. These everyday moments may seem ordinary, but they are the building blocks of family relationships and childhood memories.

For too many children in foster care, however, summer looks very different. Time with parents is often limited to brief, scheduled interactions in unfamiliar settings, far removed from the natural experiences that help strengthen family bonds.

What makes this especially frustrating is that it doesn't have to be this way. We have decades of research showing that strong parent-child connections help maintain healthy attachments, reduce trauma, and support reunifications. Yet we have made far too little progress in ensuring that children in foster care have frequent, meaningful, and high-quality family time with their parents. Even the language we use matters. "Visitation" sounds like a privilege or an appointment; "family time" recognizes that preserving the parent-child relationship is essential to a child's well-being.

At Family Defense Council, we will continue to elevate this issue, share promising practices, and advocate for systems that recognize family time as a critical component of child well-being—not an afterthought. We know what works. Now it's time to make high-quality family time the standard rather than the exception.

Would you like technical assistance to improve family time practices in your community? Contact me at WendyS@getsunlight.org



Resources — New + Newly Discovered



Focus on Family Time

- This Memo from the Children's Bureau emphasizes the importance of family time in reducing the trauma of removal and placement of children in out-of-home care and maintaining the integrity of the parent-child relationship. [Memo](#)
- Legal Resource from California's Advokids. [The Importance of Visitation](#)
- Georgia law and juvenile court practice establish a presumption in favor of unsupervised family time, with recommended minimum visitation hours based on the child's age. [Georgia's Guide](#)
- New Jersey's Visitation [Bench Card](#) for Judges



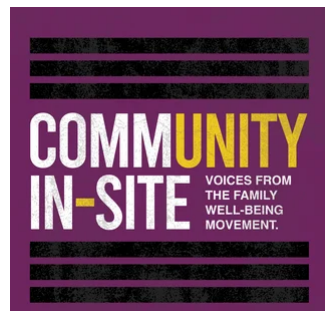
The Think Tank

Visitation as Family Regulation Laura Matthews-Jolly.
[UNC-CH Law Review](#)



Listen in

[How Hip Hop Culture can be a Cornerstone of Family Support](#) with William Feggins and Camille Sledge.



Family Defense in the News

 A federal judge rejected the state attorney general's request to pause a long-standing class-action lawsuit challenging the state's overburdened foster care and child welfare system. [West Virginia Watch](#)

 NC Legislature creates new Child Welfare Escalation Team. [Charlotte Observer](#)

 How a push to protect parental rights is reshaping Texas' foster care system. [Texas Tribune](#)



Dates & Deadlines

NACC seeks visionary leaders, advocates, professionals, and individuals with lived experience to serve on its [Board of Directors](#). Applications accepted through July 30, 2026

2026- Conferences Snapshot

Aug 11–14: NACC National (Portland, OR)

Sept 16-17: ABA 2026 Virtual National Conference on Parent Representation

Oct 14–16: NACC Virtual (Virtual)

Apr 4-7: NICWA Protecting Our Children

Do you have news, a podcast or event to share?



wendys@getsunlight.org

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