Partnering for Permanency - A Parent's Perspective at the 2019 Child Protection Summit



Left to right: Ms. Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, Second District, Ms. Daphney Branham, Esq., Ms. Laguerra G. Champagne, Esq., Ms. Rose Lee, Esq., Mr. Jonathan Jenkins, Esq.

On December 17, 2019, Ms. Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel for the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, Second District Court of Appeal, together with Managing Assistant Regional Counsels Ms. Laguerra G. Champagne, Mr. Jonathan Jenkins, Ms. Rose Lee, and Ms. Daphney Branham, presented *Partnering for Permanency - A Parent's Perspective* and *Professionalism* at the 2019 Child Protection Summit. This informative presentation engaged the audience to better understand the statute that promotes parental engagement, identify and develop the best practices to maximize parental engagement in the reunification process, and identify community resources that can assist the family.

Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, spoke on Professionalism in the Florida Courts. Ms. Neymotin discussed the Florida Bar Guidelines for Professional Conduct, Code for Resolving Professionalism Complaints, and Professionalism Expectations.

In addition, Ms. Neymotin provided the attendees with Professionalism in the Florida Courts booklets to take with them for future reference. The booklet is a collection of material obtained from the Florida Bar and the Twentieth Judicial Circuit Court websites.

Ms. Laguerra G. Champagne, Managing Assistant Regional Counsel, spoke on the parent's interpretation of court proceedings and their concerns. She further discussed parent's rights and the statutes related to those rights.

Mr. Jonathan Jenkins, Managing Assistant Regional Counsel, explained the importance of informed consent and how to obtain it. He also discussed the acronym *CONSENT* which stands for: **C**all the parent, **O**btain and exchange information, **N**otice to parents, **S**chedule a sit down, **E**xplain and address concerns, **N**ext steps, and **T**reat the parents as if they were you.

Ms. Daphney Branham, Managing Assistant Regional Counsel, and Ms. Rose Lee, Managing Assistant Regional Counsel, explained parental alienation. They referenced an article by Dr. Richard A. Gardner, MD, describing parental alienation syndrome (PAS), the common obstacles which contribute to a parent's alienation, and the consequences of an alienated parent. Their presentation concluded with the understanding that family and community support is the key ingredient in a successful family re-unification.