

CHILD WELFARE LAWYER TRIAL SKILLS  
*Telling the Story of the Family*

*THE BOOK*

*THE TRAINING*

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JLS JUVENILE  
LAW  
SOCIETY®

## THE PROGRAM

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The Juvenile Law Society (JLS) introduces a new trial skills training program for lawyers who practice in child welfare and other child custody court proceedings. The program is tailored for lawyers who represent children, parents, and state agencies in abuse, neglect, and dependency / child protection cases. It is designed to make the juvenile and family court attorney a more persuasive and effective advocate.

The program is based on a new book, *Trial Advocacy for the Child Welfare Lawyer: Telling the Story of the Family*, written by JLS Director Marvin Ventrell and published by the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA) and LexisNexis Publishing © 2011. The book and the training are comprehensive treatments of the trial, from case analysis and opening statement through closing argument. A courtroom ethics and professionalism segment is included. The book and training represent a blending of the general art of trial practice with the particulars of child welfare / custody court practice.



Historically, child welfare lawyers have lacked adequate training and mentorship in trial practice, a privilege reserved for more traditional and better-resourced areas of litigation. Additionally, the less formal nature of child welfare and custody proceedings fostered a view that the traditional art of trial practice did not belong in child welfare court. Times have changed, child welfare law is now a legitimate legal specialty, and courts and clients demand well-trained child welfare litigators. JLS trial skills training meets that demand.

## *THE BOOK*

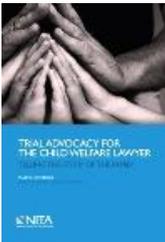
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*Trial Advocacy for the Child Welfare Lawyer: Telling the Story of the Family* is a comprehensive treatment of the trial, from case analysis and opening statement through closing argument. It incorporates generations of trial advocacy wisdom into the context of juvenile and family court proceedings.

Incorporating the established teaching methodology of the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA), at which the author is a senior instructor, the book walks the reader through a “how-to method” of each stage of the case, using child welfare court applications. Written in the context of a child welfare case, its application and usefulness extend into all child custody cases.

Trials, effectively presented, are stories – stories of mothers, fathers, and children – stories of the family. *Trial Skills for the Child Welfare Lawyer*, teaches lawyers to present the story of the family from the unique and powerful perspective of each litigant. From nuts and bolts to advanced practice techniques, the book treats trial skills as mechanisms of persuasion, whether persuading a judge or a jury.

This publication reflects author Marvin Ventrell’s three decades of experience as a litigator, teacher, writer, trial skills instructor, trial competition coach, and juvenile and family law policy advocate. It is a unique and important contribution to the art and tradition of American trial advocacy.



### **Order the Book**

Online: [www.lexisnexis.com/nita](http://www.lexisnexis.com/nita)

Toll free: 800.833.9844



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## Book Reviews

Marvin Ventrell has made a profound contribution to child welfare law with this practical book. It really should be required reading for all lawyers appearing in child welfare court. It is an artful blending of the essentials of trial advocacy with the particulars of child welfare court. It will empower attorneys to provide improved advocacy for children, parents, and agencies... and that will lead to better outcomes for our most vulnerable children and their families.

*Jennifer L. Renne, Esq.  
Director, National Child Welfare Resource Center  
American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law  
Washington, DC*

Marvin Ventrell always starts his analysis at the right place: children's cases merit the same standards of excellence as do any cases. He incorporates the best of traditional trial practice to create a comprehensive "how to" manual. This book will benefit all lawyers, from novices to experienced litigators.

*Richard Cozzola, Esq.  
Supervisory Attorney  
Children's Law Project, Legal Assistance Foundation of  
Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago, Illinois*

Children and families deserve the best that advocates have to offer – and no one knows better than Marvin Ventrell how to teach those advocates their craft. This book conveys meaningful and practical knowledge on how to effectively represent clients who are the most vulnerable people in the courtroom. I've had the honor of teaching with Mr. Ventrell for many years; this book sets out on the printed page the knowledge and passion he conveys in person. It's a masterpiece on the art of child advocacy by a master of the art.

*Hon. Robert McGahey  
District Court Trial Judge  
Denver County, Denver, Colorado*

## *THE TRAINING*

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The JLS trial skills program is a comprehensive training in the essentials of trial advocacy.\* JLS offers a range of trainings from half-day *Nuts and Bolts* to *Specific Skills* sessions to *Full Day* and *Multiple Day* sessions. JLS trial skills training is conducted on site at the client office or agency. Participants receive a copy of the book, *Trial Advocacy for the Child Welfare Lawyer: Telling the Story of the Family*. The training is a combination of lecture, demonstrations, and participant learn-by-doing performances. The longer the session, the more trainee performance is involved. The training is conducted by JLS Director Marvin Ventrell and JLS trial skills faculty, all of whom have extensive trial practice, juvenile law, and trial skills training expertise.

### **Training topics include the following:**

- Case Analysis  
*Case Theory, Theme, and Story Devices*
- Opening Statement  
*Structure and Persuasion*
- Direct Examination  
*Organization and Techniques*
- Cross Examination  
*Organization and Techniques*
- Expert Witnesses  
*Eight Steps to Successful Expert Exam*
- Handling Difficult Witnesses  
*Impeachment and Control*
- Making and Meeting Objections  
*The Essentials of Form and Substance*
- Introduction of Exhibits  
*Preliminary and Substantive Foundations*
- Closing Argument  
*Structure and Persuasion*
- Ethics and Professionalism  
*Integrity in the Courtroom*

\*Continuing Legal Education Credit (general and ethics)

## Training Testimonials

*What a fantastic job JLS did...how grateful we are!*  
State Juvenile Court Administrator

*Thank you, thank you, thank you, for the book, but mostly for the outstanding seminar. This has to be the best-organized and most useful seminar I have attended in 38 plus years. It gave me great insight into the juvenile cases.*  
State Juvenile Court Judge

*The best training ever!*  
Child's Attorney

## Training Inquiries

**Online:** [www.juvenilelawsociety.org/Contact-Us.html](http://www.juvenilelawsociety.org/Contact-Us.html)

**Email:** [info@juvenilelawsociety.org](mailto:info@juvenilelawsociety.org)

**Call:** 303.689.9786



## The Trainer and Author

Marvin Ventrell founded the Juvenile Law Society in 2009 following 15 years as the chief executive officer of the National Association of Counsel for Children. In his 26-year legal career, Mr. Ventrell has been a litigation firm associate and partner, a public defender, an association director, a policy advocate, a teacher, and a trial skills instructor. He is a recipient of the ABA Child Advocacy Award and the Kempe Award, and is a Fellow of the Colorado Bar Foundation. Mr. Ventrell co-directed the national program sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of HHS Children's Bureau that established Child Welfare Law as a formal legal specialty and created the Child Welfare Attorney Certification Program. He co-edited the national treatise, *Child Welfare Law and Practice*, and compiled the national examination for child welfare law proficiency. He is also the author of numerous articles and book chapters including, *The Evolution of the Dependency Component of the Juvenile Court*. Mr. Ventrell is responsible for the creation of the National Children's Law Office Project that supports the creation and maintenance of model children's law offices through the project publication, *Children's Law Office Guidebook*. Together with the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA), Mr. Ventrell established the annual NITA *Rocky Mountain Child Advocacy Training Institute*, now in its 17th year. He serves as a faculty trial skills trainer for NITA's National, Regional, and Specialty Programs.



*JLS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing access to justice for children in crisis. The primary activity of JLS is training and education of child welfare and juvenile justice attorneys.*

*For more information, visit the JLS Website and Facebook pages.*



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