

Helping Children, Building Skills

Participation in the Child Welfare Clinic provides valuable field experience and marketable professional skills to clinic interns, in addition to providing opportunities to serve children and the community.

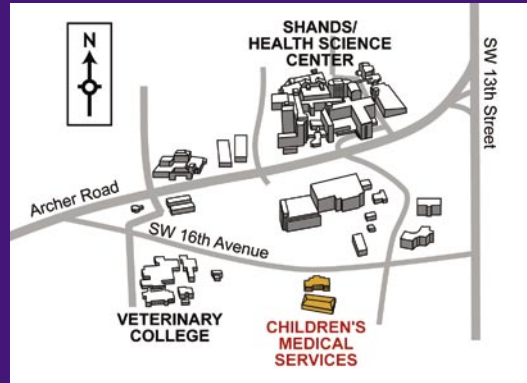
Important educational experiences gained by clinic interns include:

- Strengthening of analytical skills through required assessment of strengths and weaknesses of potential case arguments.
- Improvement of litigation skills in preparing the Child Protection Team for court appearances.
- Development of practical skills through opportunities to draft motions and/or appear in court on behalf of the Child Protection Team.
- Learning the benefits of mediation and negotiation, and using those skills in communicating with opposing counsel on behalf of the Child Protection Team.
- Assisting in development of models for Child Welfare Law policy changes.
- Experiencing the dynamics of working in a public institutional setting.



Location

The Child Welfare Clinic office is located in the Gerald L. Schreiber Children's Medical Services Center (Building A) at 1701 SW 16th Ave.



Child Welfare Clinic

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UF LAW

CHILD WELFARE CLINIC



Law and Medicine Working Together For Children

- Help Abused and Neglected Children
- Work with Medical and Child Welfare Professionals
- Develop Marketable Professional Skills



Child Welfare Clinic

The Child Welfare Clinic (CWC) was founded in 2003 as an affiliate of the Levin College of Law's Center on Children and Families. Its mission is to enhance children's well-being by improving collaboration among professionals serving at-risk children.

Under the direction of Legal Skills Professor Monique Houghton Worrell (*above, right*) and in conjunction with the University of Florida Office of the General Counsel, students act as legal counsel for the Child Protection Team (CPT) and provide case analysis, legal research, drafting of motions and/or memoranda, assistance in trial preparation and communication with local counsel. Students work on-site at the UF Children's Medical Services building, conferring with doctors, nurse practitioners and case coordinators in a multidisciplinary environment.

More than half the ongoing cases in a typical courthouse involve children and families. Interns with the Child Welfare Clinic obtain valuable training and experience with cases involving child abuse and neglect, child custody, domestic violence and health care. All students in the clinic attend an intensive seminar to prepare them to work in an interdisciplinary environment, and are trained legal interns, certified by the Florida Supreme Court.

A Multidisciplinary Experience

The University of Florida's Child Protection Team serves as a voice for abused and neglected children throughout North Central Florida.

A multidisciplinary group of medical and child welfare professionals, the CPT investigates alleged cases of abuse or neglect from the 16-county area surrounding Gainesville.

To better meet that responsibility, the team calls on the services of the Child Welfare Clinic, where law students facilitate a unified and coordinated assessment of each case among various child welfare professionals.

This groundbreaking collaboration between the medical, social work and legal professions unites them in a non-adversarial setting to achieve a common goal — to serve and protect children.



"The clinic was an enriching learning experience. Interns had the opportunity to work directly with all of the people and organizations involved with abused children to develop a plan in the best interest of the child."

— Anna Constance Shea, CWC Intern



Curriculum

The clinic is a nine-credit, two-semester legal skills program with a one-week prep course emphasizing teamwork and collaboration with other disciplines and governmental agencies.

Students attend biweekly staff meetings and participate in case reviews. They also attend weekly classes and team meetings to assess and discuss case assignments and research projects. Students are evaluated on written work and their performance with the team.

Clinic Schedule

In addition to regular class hours, interns are required to be on-site at the CPT office for 10 hours per week to be available for consultation with CPT team members. For a detailed class schedule, contact the UF College of Law Center on Children and Families.

Application Process

Prerequisites: Students must have earned 48 credit hours and have taken one of two elective courses: Child, Parent and State or Family Law.

Application: The deadline for applications is determined by Student Affairs, which distributes and collects applications for the clinics.