



## Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Deborah Kagan

**Law School:** UC Hastings

**Organization:** Children's Law Center of CA

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### Week of June 15<sup>th</sup>

I would like to give a huge thank you to [Equal Justice America](#) for the opportunity to be an [EJA Fellow](#). This summer, I am interning at Children's Law Center, focusing on dependency law.

My internship is a mix of working from home and working in office. So far, it has been a great experience that I am very grateful and thankful for.

As part of my intern duties, I read reports provided by social workers that have a recommendation on them for the court to adopt regarding a specific case. Many of these reports are attached to a hearing date. Due to COVID-19, those hearing dates did not happen, as the courts were closed. My job is to call the client and let them know what that recommendation was, to check in with the client and see how they are doing, and to let them know that their legal team is here for them. When I talk to clients, I notice one common theme: resiliency. Despite their circumstances, they are able to build a better life for themselves, which inspires me to do the work I do.

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### Week of July 6<sup>th</sup>

I have been at Children's Law Center for a little over a month now. For this summer, I was selected to be an Equal Justice America Fellow ([#EJAFellow](#) [Equal Justice America](#)) to help fund my summer work. This opportunity has allowed me to discover dependency law. A common challenge I see with COVID-19 despite backlogged cases, is the ability to conduct trials. Judges have been giving attorneys the choice of an in-person trial or a virtual trial. Due to COVID19, both options present their own difficulties. Some challenges for virtual trials include the fact that your client is not right next to you, so if you tell your client something or call an objection, there might be a lag and the client can continue doing something you want them to stop. Yet, in-person trials have the risk of people contracting COVID-19, meaning



there is no perfect solution.

Recently, my major project has been doing pretrial work for a case, including going through hundreds of pages of reports and putting my legal research skills to the test.

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## **Week of July 27<sup>th</sup>**

I have been at Children's Law Center for my summer internship. For this summer, I was selected to be an Equal Justice America Fellow ([EJA Fellow](#)) to help fund my summer work. My major project has been doing pretrial work for a case, including going through hundreds of pages of reports and putting my legal research skills to the test. Just recently, I was able to see the start to this trial over Zoom. Many judges and attorneys agree that this trial is the first of its kind being that it is over Zoom and completely virtual.

I have also been sitting in with client – family – team discussions, which has had its own learning opportunities. I reaffirmed my knowledge that a child's environment, regardless of their age, is so important and vital to their upbringing. I have also been pleasantly surprised at how amazing some of the children are at being self-advocates and overcoming their own challenges with the support of their team.

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## **Week of August 10<sup>th</sup>**

This is my last #EJAFellowUpdate after a summer of working in dependency law at Children's Law Center of California. I, again, am very grateful to have had the opportunity to be able to work this summer, and to have been a fellow of Equal Justice America.

This summer taught me a lot about dependency law. I was tasked with completely working on a case's pre-trial and was able to see that trial come to Zoom.

This internship and EJA have taught me to always look for ways to provide justice to all. I go back to school this week as a 2L, and I am excited to announce that I will be able to continue this justice for all mission this semester by working on an asylum case for the Refugee and Human Rights Clinic.

To support students like me working to help ensure "justice for all" and access to civil legal services for everyone, regardless of income status, you can donate to Equal Justice America.