



Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Support Center for Child Advocates

Update 1: Hi everyone! I'm excited to share that I am interning this summer with the Support Center for Child Advocates and I have been awarded an Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship for this work. I'll be sharing updates every so often about the work that I am doing this summer. Here is my first one!

I've finished two weeks at the Support Center so far, and am learning a LOT about the Child Welfare System. Most of the cases that I am working on at the Support Center involve children who have been sexually or physically abused. I've been thinking a lot recently about secondhand trauma, and in anticipation of my ongoing work with these types of cases I'm committing to ensure that I make and take sufficient time each day for myself. This is a practice that I hope to carry with me into my career as a public interest lawyer, and I also hope to encourage all of you hardworking folks to also take a break every once in a while.

Update 2: Hi everyone! I'm back with another update for my Equal Justice Fellowship. For the past two weeks I have been working on an appeal for an attorney at the Support Center, and it is such a complicated case. Here you can see two out of three huge folders filled with documentation on this case. The other intern and I are jumping in to assist the staff attorney and social worker on the case with going through the documents. Having more hands-on deck means that we will have a thorough appeal prepared for our client, which is one of the reasons why having funding for public interest fellowships through Equal Justice America is so important.

Update 3: I am very excited to share that today at the Support Center for Child Advocates I was able to put my name on the record as a certified legal intern for the first time! This means that I was able to represent my clients and ask questions on their behalf during the hearing, while my supervising attorney sat in on the hearing. I am beyond grateful to the lead attorney on this case for helping me prep for the specific judge, for looking over my drafts of questions before the hearing, and for guiding me during the hearing to ensure that I represented our clients well.



Entry 4: This week I finished my internship at the Support Center for Child Advocates, and that means it's time for my last EJA Update!

This summer, I was able to participate in hearings, meet with clients on home visits, and conduct preliminary investigative work for hearings. My fellow intern and I did research on potential advocacy steps to reduce racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. I learned that child welfare is a grey area of the law. Removing children from the only home environment they know is traumatic. But leaving a child in a situation where they are being sexually or physically abused can also cause a lot of trauma. It is hard to weigh those different interests and I believe it takes a very good attorney to be able to advocate in this realm. I've learned a lot this summer, and I am grateful to EJA, the Support Center, and all of the advocates I've met this summer who helped me become a better advocate.

This summer internship was made possible through my fellowship with Equal Justice America. Please consider donating.