Diane Abbey Law Center for Children and Families

The Abbey Center provides academic and professional opportunities for New York Law School students who are interested in children’s and family issues. In addition, the Abbey Center hosts conferences, provides information for practitioners and members of the public, and publishes the JustFamilies.org blog. The Abbey Center takes an interdisciplinary approach, with the goal of enhancing the quality of advocacy and services for children and families.

The requirements for the Abbey Center are designed to ensure that students have opportunities to work on behalf of children and families, and to contribute to family law-related policy debate and scholarship. In addition, they provide students with a strong foundation for achieving their professional goals.

Below is a summary of the Abbey Center requirements. For more information, please see our webpage: http://www.nyls.edu/diane_abbey_law_center_for_children_and_families/.

a. Courses: Students must take the Abbey Center Colloquium class, an introductory course that is generally taken in the 2L year, as well as 12 additional credits of approved family law-related substantive law or skills-based courses (approximately one course each semester). “Family law-related” refers to practice areas that involve representing or providing services for children and families, including: child welfare, education, matrimonial practice, adoption, juvenile justice, elder law, domestic violence, immigration, and mental health.

b. Placements: Students should complete one family law-related placement each year, which may include an academic year or summer job, externship, clinic, or significant volunteer opportunity. The Abbey Center works with evening students to ensure that they are able to meet this requirement.

c. Clinic/Capstone Project: Students must complete one graded clinic, or an independent study project that is approved by the Director or Associate Director as a Capstone project. Independent study projects should serve a practical purpose, and generally should be done in collaboration with a non-profit organization or government agency and under the supervision of the Director or Associate Director or another NYLS faculty member.

d. Center Activities: Students should complete at least 5 hours of Abbey Center work each semester, which may include any of the following:

- Drafting and completing one or more blog posts that are approved for publication on the Abbey Center’s JustFamilies.org blog. Suggested topics will be provided; students may also independently select topics subject to approval. In general, blog articles should concern current family law-related legal issues that impact children and families in New York (including cases, laws, and policy initiatives).

- Helping to plan, coordinate, and/or carry out an Abbey Center event.
Other projects proposed by the Director or Associate Director, or proposed by students subject to approval by the Director or Associate Director.

e. **Events:** The Abbey Center hosts or co-hosts multiple public and internal events over the course of each year. Students should attend at least two of these events.

Here is a list of current courses that satisfy the Abbey Center 12-credit requirement:

**Clinical Courses (may also satisfy Capstone Requirement):**

- Child Welfare Clinic
- Civil Rights Clinic
- Domestic Violence Litigation Clinic
- Elder Law Clinic
- Guardianship Project Clinic
- Immigration Law and Litigation Clinic
- Immigration and Refugee Rights Clinic
- Legislative Advocacy Clinic
- Suspension Representation Clinic
- Wills Clinic

**Writing & Simulation Courses:**

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Drafting: Legislation
- Drafting: Litigation
- Memo and Brief Writing
- Negotiation, Counseling and Interviewing
- Negotiation: Theory and Practice
- Trial Practice

**Other Courses:**

- Advocacy Skills in Cases Involving Persons with Mental Disabilities
- Americans with Disabilities Act: Law, Policy and Practice
- Anatomy of NYS Divorce Action
- Children and the Law
- Civil Rights Law
- Community-Based Initiatives
- Custody Evaluations, Juvenile and Family Law and Mental Disability
- Domestic Violence and the Law
- Education Law and Policy
- Elder Law and Aging in America
- Estate Administration
- Estate Planning
- Family Court
- Family Formation: Adoption and Assisted Reproduction
- Family Law
- Gender in American Legal History
- Immigration Law
- Immigration Practice
- Juvenile Delinquency
- Law, Public Policy and Social Change
- Mental Disability Law, Survey
- Race, Gender, Class and Mental Disability Law
- Racial Discrimination and American Law
- Refugee and Asylum Law
- Remedies
- Reproductive Rights Law
- The Role of the Government Attorney
- Sex Crimes and Child Abuse
- Sex Offenders
- Sexuality and the Law
- Special Education Law
- State and Local Government
- Statistical Literacy for Lawyers
- Trauma and Mental Disability Law
- Wills, Trusts and Future Interests