



OÑATI INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE  
FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF LAW

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INSTITUTO INTERNACIONAL  
DE SOCIOLOGÍA JURÍDICA DE OÑATI

## INTERNATIONAL MASTER IN SOCIOLOGY OF LAW



# "Procedural Justice in Practice: Enhancing Parents' Experience in the Child Welfare Court System with the Use of Parent Mentors"

*by Alicia Summers  
(University of Nevada, Reno)*

This lecture reflects on the challenges parents face in the child welfare court system in the United States and the methods that have been used to enhance the process for them. An overview of the United States' child welfare framework and court process. This will set the stage for the discussion, providing context for the many challenges that parents and judges face in making the process fair. The talk ends with a discussion of the research on a promising practice that pairs parents who have successfully reunified with their children with parents new to the process to help them navigate the court proceedings.



**December 17, 2019 at 11:15 am**  
**Achille Loria-Karl Renner Room (1st floor)**

Alicia Summers has a PhD in Social Psychology from the University of Nevada, Reno. She is the Director of Data Savvy Consulting and works as an independent consultant in the field of child welfare. Dr. Summers has 14 years of experience conducting applied research and evaluation with the juvenile and family courts, specializing in child abuse and neglect court work.

Dr. Summers previously served as the Program Director for Research and Evaluation at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and currently serves as the Director of Research and Evaluation for the Capacity Building Center for Courts, providing technical assistance services to Court Improvement Programs all over the nation. Her research focus is on improving the quality of court hearings, examining compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act, using data in a meaningful way, and evaluating court programs and practices to contribute to the growing evidence-base of what works.

She also serves as adjunct faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno for the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology and Judicial Studies programs.