



## For Judges and Attorneys Handling Child Protective Services Cases

April 24, 2018

### **Reminder: 2018 TBLS Applications for Specialization Exam in Child Welfare Law Due April 30, 2018**

The 2018 applications are now available online through April 30, 2018 at the TBLS “**Get Certified**” page. Among other requirements, applicants must be licensed to practice law for at least five years and show substantial involvement in specific matters and cases as listed below. Applicants are notified in July, 2018 of the TBLS decision to admit them to take the Exam, and the Exam will be held on October 15, 2018 in Austin. For details concerning the application process and exam information, please visit [www.tbls.org](http://www.tbls.org) or contact TBLS at [tbls@tbls.org](mailto:tbls@tbls.org), or call 1-855-277-8257.

#### **Child Welfare Applicants are required to have:**

- Devoted a **minimum of 25%** of his or her time practicing child welfare law in Texas during each of the **three years immediately preceding the application**;
- Served as **lead counsel** for a party or child from inception of the case or time of appointment or engagement to final judgment **in 10 cases that meet one of these requirements**:
  1. a **contested child welfare case in a trial court** of record that involves oral testimony and factual findings, excluding default judgments; or
  2. **an appeal in a child welfare case** that is fully briefed on the merits at the appellate level. Under (b), an appeal that applicant prosecutes or defends in an intermediate appellate court and in the Supreme Court of Texas counts as one case.
- **Participated in 20 cases** that meet **one of these requirements**:
  1. A contested child welfare case in which applicant served as lead counsel for a party or a child and that was **resolved without a trial** on the merits; **or**
  2. **Post-trial proceedings** in which applicant played a **substantial role**.

#### **Certification without Examination:**

The new specialty area offers an option of **granting certification without requiring a written examination** to an applicant who:

1. Has been **licensed for 10 years**;
2. Is **certified by TBLS in Family Law**.
3. **Meets all of the Substantial Involvement requirements** of the Child Welfare standards.

This **grandfather option** is only available for the first 3 years, ending with the 2020 certification applications.

For further information, please consult the complete Child Welfare Standards for Attorney Certification on the Supreme Court of Texas’ website, available at <http://www.txcourts.gov/media/1437204/179014.pdf>.

We hope you will consider being among the select group to be the first attorneys Board Certified in Child Welfare Law and be sure to stay tuned for possible reimbursement scholarship opportunities from the Children's Commission for those who pass their TBLS Exam and become Board Certified in Child Welfare Law.

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