

ALBANY, NY • OCTOBER 27TH - 29TH, 2025



NEW YORK STATE CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE
2025 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**Empowering Professionals to Respond
to Child Abuse**



Welcoming:
Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, CSEC & Victim Advocates,
Child Protective/Child Welfare Personnel, Probation Officers, Medical Providers,
Mental Health Professionals, School Personnel, Community Outreach & Education Staff,
and others working with children

AT-A-GLANCE

MONDAY: OCT. 27th

1:15pm-5:00pm
**EARLY CONFERENCE
CHECK-IN**

2:00pm-5:30pm
**PRE-CONFERENCE
SEMINAR:**
(separate registration)

TUESDAY: OCT. 28th

7:30am-5:00pm
Conference Check-in

8:30am-5:30pm
Exhibitor Tables

8:00am-8:30am
Breakfast/Welcome

8:45am-9:45am
Keynote Session

10:00am-11:15am
Session 1

11:30am-12:45pm
Session 2

12:45pm-1:45pm
LUNCH

1:45pm-3:00pm
Session 3

3:15pm-4:30pm
Session 4

5:00pm-6:00pm
Networking Reception

WEDNESDAY: OCT. 29th

8:00am-8:45am
Breakfast & Awards

9:00am-10:15am
Session 1

10:30am-12:00pm
Closing Presentation

12:00pm-12:30pm
Raffles/Send-off

REGISTRATION

The purpose of this Conference is to develop and enhance professional skills in prevention, recognition, assessment, and treatment of all forms of maltreatment.



COST: \$295 per person / \$220 NYSCA Member / Team of four- \$180 per person

REGISTER BY: 4:30pm, Friday, October 24th [REGISTER HERE](#) or Scan Code

PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINAR: Oct. 27 / 2:00pm-5:30pm

FORECAST Model: *seating is limited-register for this session* [HERE](#)

PRESENTED BY: Kerri Bergendahl and Tony DeVincenzo

Join the Child Advocacy Training & Support (CATS) Center team to explore what it can look like when Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and their multidisciplinary team (MDT) partners provide children and families with a trauma-informed response.

Overview of NCTSN's 12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families, which offers a conceptual framework and shared language. Plus, a demonstration of UMSL's FORECAST Model. Each FORECAST simulation is a full-day training, so we are choosing one of our favorite modules to share with you. The FORECAST model is interactive and requires audience engagement!

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE: Derek Clark / 8:30am-9:45am



Derek Clark "Rapping Dad"

An inspiring motivational speaker, who overcame a dark and traumatic past, having spent 13 years in the foster care system after enduring abuse, rejection, and abandonment. His early life was filled with challenges that could have easily led him down a destructive path, but Derek refused to be defined by his circumstances.

Through resilience, determination, and a shift in mindset, he learned to transform his pain into purpose. Derek embraced his story not as a victim but as a victor, choosing to write a new narrative of hope, healing, and empowerment. By divorcing himself from the mindset of helplessness, he created a positive destiny, inspiring countless others with his message of resilience, self-empowerment, and the power of owning one's future, regardless of the past. His journey exemplifies the transformative power of personal responsibility and choosing to rise above adversity.

**TUESDAY
OCT. 28th**

WORKSHOP SESSION 1: 10:00am-11:15am

1A Embedding Trauma-Informed Care: A Cross-Agency Organizational Assessment Initiative

Presented by Marla Behler & Kerri Bergendahl

1B Preventative to Crisis Intervention: Bridging the Gap

Presented by Jessica Wexler & Rebecca Mahon

1C Beyond the Screen: Building a Trauma-Informed MDT Response to Internet Crimes Against Children

Presented by Matthew Stegner

1D The Missing Children Recovery Operation; what did we learn and how can we help you to prepare.

Presented by Nancy Harris & Madeline Hehir

1E Bearing Witness: Holding Space for Survivors of Family-Controlled Sex Trafficking of Children

Presented by Kait Gannon & Laurie Krull

WORKSHOP SESSION 2: 11:30am-12:45pm

2A Building Resilience in Yourself and Others

Presented by Tamaé Memole & Jess Tangua

2B Empowering Parents: Unlocking the power of SEL at home

Presented by Stefanie Szwejbka & Rebecca Macfarlane

2C Facing the Big Bad F-Word: Practical Fundraising Tips for Small to Medium Nonprofits and CACs

Presented by Rachel Johnson

2D Integrating Nutrient-Dense Foods into Mental Health Services

Presented by Vicki Braunstein & Kiera Keyon

2E From Disclosure to Trial: Prepping Children for Testifying

Presented by Chelsie Hamilton & Colleen Marvel

LUNCH: 12:45pm-1:45pm

WORKSHOP SESSION 3: 1:45pm-3:00pm

3A Unified Pursuit: Merging Title IX and Criminal Investigations for Comprehensive Justice

Presented by Brook Thomas & Allie Kibler-Campbell

3B The Moment That Changed Everything: A Case Study in Prevention Education and Creative Arts Therapy

Presented by Shirin Mazdeyasna & Audrey Peterson

3C Strategic Planning and Foresight in Uncertain Times

Presented by Brie Lusheck

3D DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: GOING BACK TO BASICS TO MOVE FORWARD

Presented by Octavia E. Cowans

3E Leading Together: A Panel of CAC Educators and Executive Directors

Presented by Jennifer Wormley & Derek Teft (Saratoga Center for the Family)
Jami Rock & Scott McDowell (Clinton County Child Advocacy Center)
Sam Vaugh & Christopher Russel (BestSelf)

TUESDAY
OCT. 28th
(continued)

WORKSHOP SESSION 4: 3:15pm-4:30pm

4A The Utilization of Forensic Nurses in Child Maltreatment Cases

Presented by Kaylin N. Dawson

4B Enhancing Emotional Intelligence for Child Abuse Professionals

Presented by Ilana Beausejour

4C Accessible Forensic Interviews: Tailoring Your Approach for Children with IDD

Presented by Geri Brooks

4D Layers of Harm: How Racism and Poverty Shape the Impact and Response to Child Abuse

Presented by Kristina Coleman

4E Fur Real Leaders: CAC Directors & Their Therapy Dogs Share Their Journey

Presented by Directors: Amy Quonce (CAC of Northern NY), Ashley Davoli (CAC of the Finger Lakes), Deb George (Madison County CAC) Jess Ferrantino (CPCA: The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse), and Kris Beard (Cortland CAC)

NETWORKING RECEPTION: TUESDAY 5:00pm-6:00pm

WEDNESDAY
OCT. 29th

BREAKFAST & AWARDS: 8:00am-8:45am

WORKSHOP SESSION 5: 9:00am-10:15am

5A: Building a Road for Run-Away Youth

Presented by Sam Vaughn & David Mann

5B Let's Talk About It: Real Tools for the Real Conversations within your MDT

Presented by Geri Brooks

5C Navigating Safety Planning with Youth Who Engage in Problematic Sexual Behavior: Meeting Children Where They Are

Presented by Geoff Sidoli

5D Leadership That Has Greater Impact

Presented by Octavia E. Cowans

5E MDT Considerations for Presenting Evidence in a Forensic Interview

Presented by Michelle Kline & Gabby Glenning

CLOSING PRESENTATION/RAFFLES: 10:30am-12:30pm

The Power of Adaptability in Communication

Presented by Jen Henry

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." We all strive to be respectful and considerate—but even with the best intentions, our conversations can miss the mark. That's why we've invited Jen back to replace confusion with clarity and turn good intentions into effective conversations.

In this engaging closing presentation, Jen will offer a quick refresher on the four Bird Styles, then shifts the focus to something even more powerful: adapting your communication style in real time to better connect with others. When we adjust how we communicate based on who we're speaking with, conversations become clearer, outcomes sharper, and collaboration stronger.

With her signature energy and playful approach, Jen makes it easy to laugh, learn, and apply what you've learned right away. You'll leave not only feeling seen and understood—but also better equipped to create that experience for others.

2025 NYSCA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

Networking Reception: Desmond Hotel, Fort Orange Courtyard, Tuesday, 5:00pm-6:00pm

2025 Award Presentations: Wednesday, 8:30am-8:45am

Raffle Prizes: Wednesday following the Closing Presentation

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS: Space in each session is limited and available on a first-come basis. While we ask for workshop preferences during registration to help us plan, these selections are not binding and do not guarantee a reserved seat.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE: available for all attendees

CONFERENCE CEUs: CEU credits will be offered by The New York Foundling and are available for Mental Health Counseling, Social Work, and Psychology. Check in for CEUs will be at the registration table.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

Hotel Address: The Crowne Plaza Albany – The Desmond Hotel
660 Albany Shaker Rd, Albany, NY 12211

Hotel reservation information will be provided via email to all registered attendees.

If you have any questions, please contact: ppotter@nyschildrensalliance.org

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:

COST: \$295 per person
\$220 NYSCA Member

TEAM OF FOUR: \$180 per person



[REGISTER HERE](#) or scan code prior to 4:30pm, Friday, October 24, 2025



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