



CHILDREN'S LAW AND POLICY MJ CORE CURRICULUM AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO SCHOOL OF LAW

The Master of Jurisprudence (MJ) in Children's Law and Policy is a degree program tailored to help nonlegal professionals better serve children and families. Whether your field is social work or education, health care or law enforcement, a deeper knowledge of family law enables you to make a difference while it prepares you for a leadership position. See below for a general curriculum overview of the program.*

TERM 1

LAW 665: Introduction to the Study of Law and the Legal System (2 credits)

This required foundational course introduces students to the sources and functions of law in our society. The course begins with an explanation of the structure and traditions of the American court system. Students then learn to read and analyze cases and statutes and develop basic legal written and oral presentation skills. The course uses child and family law cases and problems and provides students with the background they will need for future children's law and policy studies.

LAW 667: Introduction to Children's Law, Policy and Practice (2 credits)

This required course is designed to give students an introductory overview of the law as it affects children. It begins with a discussion of the constitutional relationship among children, parents and the state, as well as the respective roles of the federal and state governments in the regulation of children and families. The course then introduces students to the principal areas of civil and criminal law that affect children and families. With this baseline of understanding, students can choose elective courses that provide a more in-depth study of a particular topic (e.g. education law, child welfare, etc.).

TERM 2

LAW 668: Leadership Development (4 credits)

One of the distinguishing features of the Online MJ in Children's Law and Policy is its focus on the development of leadership skills for child advocates across a range of disciplines and organizations. This required cornerstone course begins with an introduction to different types and styles of leadership before turning to a more practice-based preparation for leadership in such areas as operations, human resources, finance, and communications.

***Note that curricular offerings and requirements are subject to change.**

TERM 3

**Choose 6 credits of
elective options**
(see sample list)

TERM 4

**Choose 6 credits of
elective options**
(see sample list)

TERM 5

**Choose 6 credits of
elective options**
(see sample list)

TERM 6

LAW 677: Thesis/Capstone Project (4 credits)

Students are expected to complete either a thesis or capstone project of substantial depth that explores a specific area of children's law and policy and that integrates subject matter and/or leadership skills learned in the M.J. curriculum. The project is completed in close cooperation with a faculty advisor. Students are required to present their thesis or capstone project to faculty and fellow students during their graduation (Educational Immersion) weekend.

SAMPLE ELECTIVE OFFERINGS

670: CHILD WELFARE LAW AND POLICY (3 CREDITS)

This course focuses on federal and state legal and policy efforts to protect children from abuse, neglect and other forms of maltreatment. Topics include mandatory reporting laws, liability issues, the general structure and content of child protection laws, including permanency planning and termination of parental rights. Students will explore the concept of the best interest of the child in a legal context and review laws and research aimed at promoting children's welfare.

679: CHILDREN'S HEALTH LAW AND POLICY (3 CREDITS)

The purpose of this course is to teach interested students the application of law to critical public health issues that affect children and youth. Students will first learn basic principles of public health including the distinction between health promotion, disease prevention, and health protection. Next, the course will address the constitutional and statutory foundation of public health law, how legislative and regulatory decisions must negotiate the balance between individual rights and public good, and how the principles of *parens patriae* and state police powers affect child health. Case studies in the areas of obesity, reproductive health rights of minors, mandatory school immunizations, student drug testing, and violence prevention will illustrate the application of public health jurisprudence from the national to the state levels.

691: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (3 CREDITS)

Domestic Violence (Theory, Polices and Societal Impact) will provide students with an understanding of the evolution of domestic violence theory; an overview of what acts constitute domestic violence; myths surrounding the causes of domestic violence; common misconceptions regarding the types of people who abuse and are abused; the various state and federal laws that affect domestic violence arrests, police liability, prosecution, and services; and the impact of domestic violence in family law, child welfare, and immigration proceedings. Through weekly modules incorporating readings, lectures, videos and supplemental materials, students will become familiar with the many components (social and legal) of this complex subject.

669: EDUCATION LAW AND POLICY (3 CREDITS)

This course explores some of the challenging legal and practical issues confronting education in America, including the uncertain boundaries between public and private education, the constitutional and statutory rights of students, including equal access and treatment, the increasingly fluid constitutional and statutory rights of teachers, and the structure of educational governance, including the role of the federal government, local control, school board powers and even strategic planning.

672: FAMILY LAW AND POLICY (3 CREDITS)

The course covers issues of parental rights, the role of the child's voice in custody cases, marriage formation and dissolution, parenting time, domestic violence, and the various standards courts have applied in deciding child custody. Also covered are the rights of third parties to custody and post dissolution conflicts including the role that mediation and parent coordination play in resolving parental conflicts.

687: INTRODUCTION TO LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ADVOCACY (3 CREDITS)

The purpose of this course is to provide tools and strategies for students interested in learning the techniques for effective advocacy at the state and federal levels. The first portion of the course will provide historical context on the three branches of governments' ability to make policy. The course will then examine the processes that turn a problem into a legislative solution, including how to move a bill into law. These tools include identifying an issue, conducting national surveys, building a base through community organizing, drafting, lobbying, and offering testimony in committee. A recurring theme in the course is the need to examine external obstacles that impact policy making. Students will also learn how to conduct racial equity impact assessments and how the absence of this work has impacted policy decisions in the United States in the past.

671: JUVENILE JUSTICE LAW AND POLICY (3 CREDITS)

This course explores the law, policies and practices of the American juvenile justice system, past, present and future. The focus is on children who are in conflict with the law and those who, by virtue of their status as children, are subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court for engaging in conduct such as curfew violations, running away, and other forms of potentially harmful adolescent behavior. Among other issues, the course will examine how juvenile justice law and policy has been shaped by new research on adolescent development, including brain research.

683: LEGAL ISSUES IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE (3 CREDITS)

The course will address the Constitutional implications of student discipline and the statutory provisions governing student discipline and the administrative hearing process. Students will learn about 'zero tolerance' policies, the role that school discipline plays in the 'school-to-prison pipeline' and the discriminatory impact of school discipline policies. Issues relating to discipline in charter schools and discipline of students with disabilities will also be addressed. Other topics to be discussed include disciplinary-related challenges that arise in the context of protecting vulnerable children, including issues of harassment and bullying of LGBT students and students with disabilities, and the legal tenets governing school districts' responses to cyberbullying and the rise of social networks and digital media. Emerging trends in alternatives to punitive school discipline practices, such as human rights approaches, positive behavior interventions and supports, and restorative justice, will be examined.

673: MENTAL HEALTH LAW AND CHILDREN (3 CREDITS)

Mental health and substance abuse impacts everyone. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, in a given year approximately one quarter of adults in the United States are diagnosable for one or more mental illnesses. Additionally, one out of five children, either currently or at some point during their life, are diagnosed with a mental illness. Mental illness has a profound impact on children and families, including the legal response to these issues. Students will study the cases, statutes, and legal doctrines relating to the rights and inpatient/outpatient treatment of persons with mental illness or a developmental disability, with a special emphasis on children, youth, and parents and/or legal guardians. Topics covered include: informed consent to outpatient and inpatient treatment, admission/transfer/discharge, confidentiality of mental health records, litigation issues addressed by practitioners, and risk management strategies for mental health practitioners. This course will use cases and examples to compare and contrast application of the law and policies.

678: M.J. INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S RIGHTS (3 CREDITS)

In the last twenty years, the international community has made tremendous strides in agreeing on a set of basic human rights for children and implementing those rights through domestic, regional and international laws. This two-credit course serves as an introduction to international children's rights, and explores such thematic topics as corporal punishment, intercountry adoption, juvenile justice, child labor, and international child abduction.