

Karen Usselman Lindell

Senior Lecturer, Legal Practice Skills
University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School

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Education

Vanderbilt University Law School , J.D., First Honor Graduate	2012
Founder's Medal; Bennett Douglas Bell Memorial Award; Order of the Coif John W. Wade Scholarship VANDERBILT LAW REVIEW, Articles Editor Research Assistant to Associate Dean Lisa Bressman and to Professor Mark Brandon	
University of Georgia , B.A. in History, <i>magna cum laude</i> with High Honors	2007
Phi Beta Kappa; Charter Scholarship; Excellence in Undergraduate Research Grant	

Clerkships

Hon. Eduardo C. Robreno , U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania	2013-2014
Hon. Kent A. Jordan , U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit	2012-2013

Legal Experience

Juvenile Law Center (Philadelphia, PA)	
Senior Attorney	2018-2021
Staff Attorney	2016-2018
Skadden Fellow	2014-2016
Ropes & Gray, LLP (Boston, MA), <i>Summer Associate</i>	Summer 2011
American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee (Nashville, TN), <i>Summer Law Clerk</i>	Summer 2010

Teaching and Mentorship

Senior Lecturer, Legal Practice Skills, University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School	2021-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teach required first-year course on legal analysis, research, and written and oral communication to approximately 40 students each semesterSupervise and mentor third-year Littleton Fellow teaching assistants	
Legal Fellow & Intern Supervisor, Juvenile Law Center	2016-2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provided oversight and mentorship to Juvenile Law Center's Zubrow Fellows (two-year legal fellowship) and Soros Fellow (project-based legal fellowship)Designed and coordinated Juvenile Law Center's legal internship programSupervised and mentored 4-5 law student interns per summer and 2-3 per semester	
Dissertation Committee Member for Mina Ratkalkar, PhD, Clinical Psychology, Drexel Univ.	2020
Dissertation Title: <i>Effects of Trauma and Child Welfare History on Potential Sentencing Jurors' Decisions for Youth Prosecuted in Criminal Court</i>	
Literacy Specialist, Martha O'Bryan Center	2008-2009
Taught literacy skills to at-risk elementary, middle, and high school students	
Americorps Member, Literacy Council of Northern Virginia	2007-2008
Taught adult English-as-a-Second-Language courses	

Selected Publications and Reports

Peer Reviewed:

Karen U. Lindell, Christina Sorenson & Susan V. Mangold, *The Family First Prevention Services Act: A New Era of Child Welfare Reform*, 135 PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS 2, 282-86 (2020). [[Link](#)]

Policy Reports:

Karen U. Lindell & Katrina Goodjoint, RETHINKING JUSTICE FOR EMERGING ADULTS: SPOTLIGHT ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION, Juvenile Law Center (2020). [[Link](#)]

Lisa Pilnik, Robert G. Schwartz, Karen U. Lindell, Jessica Feierman & Christina Sorenson, TRANSFORMING JUSTICE: BRINGING PENNSYLVANIA’S YOUNG PEOPLE SAFELY HOME FROM JUVENILE JUSTICE PLACEMENTS, Juvenile Law Center (2019). [[Link](#)]

Jessica Feierman, Karen U. Lindell & Natane Eaddy, UNLOCKING YOUTH: LEGAL STRATEGIES TO END SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN JUVENILE FACILITIES, Juvenile Law Center (2017). [[Link](#)] Featured in: *Pulling Back on the Barbaric Use of Solitary Confinement*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 5, 2017). [[Link](#)]

Karen U. Lindell, Danielle Whiteman, Kate Burdick & Riya Saha Shah, IMPROVING ACCESS TO CAREER PATHWAYS FOR PHILADELPHIA’S CHILD WELFARE AND JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVED YOUTH, Juvenile Law Center (2017). [[Link](#)]

Karen U. Lindell, Riya Saha Shah & Jennifer Pokempner, TRANSITION PLANNING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, Juvenile Law Center (2016).

Selected Litigation

Direct Representation:

J.H. v. Edwards, No. 3:20-cv-00293-JWD-EWD (M.D. La. 2020):

Class action lawsuit in federal court on behalf of youth confined in Louisiana’s secure care facilities challenging their conditions of confinement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conducted direct and cross examinations during a 3-day evidentiary hearing.

In re: C.Z., No. 24 EM 2020 (Pa. 2020):

King’s Bench Petition to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on behalf of youth held in juvenile detention centers, county jails, or long-term correctional facilities seeking emergency relief to minimize the number of youth in congregate facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commonwealth v. Silvonek, No. CP-39-CR-0002141-2015 (Pa. Ct. Common Pleas 2019):

Pennsylvania Post-Conviction Relief Act Petition filed on behalf of a 14-year-old victim of abuse who was tried as an adult and sentenced to ten years beyond the statutory minimum for the homicide of her mother by her abuser.

J.J. v. Litscher, No. 17-CV-47 (W.D. Wisc. 2017):

Class action lawsuit in federal court on behalf of youth confined in Wisconsin’s youth prison challenging the constitutionality of the facility’s pervasive use of solitary confinement, pepper spray, physical restraints, and strip searches. Successful motion for preliminary injunction following a 2-day evidentiary hearing resulted in a consent decree, ongoing monitoring, and legislation to close the facility.

Amicus Briefs:

People v. Manning, No. 160034 (Mich. 2020):

Lead author of brief for Juvenile Law Center and the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan challenging the mandatory imposition of a life-without-parole sentence on an 18-year-old.

In re: Williams, No. 53879-2-II (Wash. Ct. App. 2020):

Lead author of brief for Juvenile Law Center and Team Child challenging Washington’s “Three Strikes” statute, which permits use of a juvenile offense as the basis for mandatory life without parole.

State v. Booker, No. E2018-01439-SC-R11-CD (Tenn. 2020):

Lead author of brief for Juvenile Law Center challenging Tennessee’s mandatory imposition of a de facto life-without-parole sentence on a 16-year-old convicted of felony murder.

Cruz v. United States, No. 19-989 (2d Cir. 2020):

Lead author of brief for Juvenile Law Center challenging the mandatory imposition of a life-without-parole sentence on an 18-year-old.

State v. Gregg, No. 97517-5 (Wash. 2020):

Lead author of brief for Juvenile Law Center arguing for a constitutional presumption that age is a mitigating factor in sentencing when children are tried as adults.

Commonwealth v. Lugo, No. SJC-12546 (Mass. 2018):

Lead author of brief for Juvenile Law Center and other organizations arguing that mandatory sentencing of juvenile offenders without individualized consideration of age violates the Eighth Amendment.

B.K. v. McKay, No. 17-17501 (9th Cir. 2018):

Co-author of brief for Juvenile Law Center and other advocacy organizations supporting the grant of class certification to a class of children in the custody of Arizona's child welfare system challenging their conditions and treatment.

D.Z. v. State, No. 18S-JV-00295 (Ind. 2018):

Co-author of brief for Juvenile Law Center arguing that *Miranda* protections are required before a child's statements to a school administrator working with police can be used against the child in court.

Dassey v. Dittmann, No. 17-1172 (S. Ct. 2018):

Co-author of brief for Juvenile Law Center and numerous other advocacy organizations supporting the cert petition of 16-year-old Brendan Dassey, one of the subjects of the "Making a Murderer" Netflix documentary, challenging the voluntariness of his confession.

State v. Houston-Sconiers, No. 92605-1 (Wash. 2016):

Author of brief for Juvenile Law Center and the National Juvenile Defender Center challenging the constitutionality of the mandatory transfer to adult court and harsh mandatory sentencing of two teenaged trick-or-treaters who stole candy and cell phones on Halloween.

In re: J.G., No. 16-0468 (Tex. 2016):

Author of brief for Juvenile Law Center challenging the transfer of a 16-year-old to adult court without an individualized judicial determination that transfer was in the public interest.

Mabry v. Lee County, No. 16-60231 (5th Cir. 2016):

Author of brief for Juvenile Law Center arguing that suspicionless body cavity searches of children detained for minor offenses are unconstitutional.

Selected Presentations

Adolescent Development & the Justice System:

"The Case for Rethinking Justice for Emerging Adults," Joyce Foundation, Chicago, IL, December 2019.

"Policy Considerations for Key Groups of Young Adults: Those with Behavioral Health Needs and the Latinx Community," Invited Panel Presentation, Intergovernmental Policy Academy: Young Adults and the Justice System, National Conference of State Legislatures, Philadelphia, PA, June 2019.

"Leveraging Multidisciplinary Collaboration to Promote Evidence-Driven Policy Reform," Invited Panel Plenary at Coalition for Juvenile Justice Conference on Disproportionate Minority Contact, Washington, DC, November 2018.

"Adolescent Development and the 'Reasonable Juvenile' Standard," Grand Rounds: Practical Applications in Forensic Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, November 2018.

Conditions of Confinement & Deincarceration:

"The Aftermath of the Crisis at Glen Mills: Lessons Learned and Strategies for Reform," Invited Panel Presentation, Philadelphia Bar Association, Philadelphia, PA, December 2019.

"Stop Solitary for Kids: The Role of Judges in Ending a Dangerous & Outdated Practice for Youth," National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges Annual Conference, Washington, DC, July 2017.

"Addressing Trauma, Eliminating Strip Searches," Coalition for Juvenile Justice Annual Conference, Washington, DC, June 2017.

“Driving Accountability: Solitary Confinement and Juvenile Justice Facilities,” Coalition for Juvenile Justice Annual Conference, Washington, DC, June 2017.

“Stop Solitary for Kids: Collaborations Between Law and Medicine,” Grand Rounds: Practical Applications in Forensic Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, February 2017.

Child Welfare & Disability Rights:

“Preparing for Life After School: Tools to Improve Post-School Outcomes for Students and Youth with Disabilities,” Philadelphia Bar Association Bench-Bar Conference, Atlantic City, NJ, October 2019.

“Lifelong Connections: Tools and Strategies to Achieve Meaningful Permanency for Older Youth,” Philadelphia Family Court, Philadelphia, PA, October 2018.

“Achieving Family Life for Children with Developmental Disabilities,” Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network Annual Conference, Pocono Manor, PA, June 2018.

“Youth with Disabilities Transitioning Out of the Child Welfare System: What Disability Rights Advocates Need to Know,” four-part webinar series sponsored by National Disability Rights Network, 2017.

“National Transition Strategies: Advocating in the Courtroom for Improved Outcomes for Older Youth with Disabilities,” Florida Guardian Ad Litem Conference, Orlando, FL, May 2017.

“Improving Access to Career Pathways for Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice System-Involved Youth,” Lenfest Foundation, Philadelphia, PA, April 2017.

“Transitioning Out: Improving Outcomes for Older Youth Transitioning Out of the Juvenile Justice System,” Juvenile Defender Association of Pennsylvania Annual Conference, Allentown, PA, Feb. 2017.

“The Lawyer’s Role in Finding Older Youth Permanency and Reducing Congregate Care,” National Child Welfare, Juvenile & Family Law Conference, National Association of Counsel for Children, Philadelphia, PA, August 2016.

“Transition Planning for Dependent and Delinquent Youth with Disabilities,” nine-part state-wide webinar series sponsored by Support Center for Child Advocates, 2016.

Selected Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy

Task Forces & Working Groups:

Planned and led “Rethinking Justice for Emerging Adults,” a two-day national policy forum for academic researchers and policy advocates on justice reform for young adults in the Great Lakes region, December 2019.

Appointed by Philadelphia City Council to the Youth Residential Placement Task Force, which met monthly to develop recommendations to reduce reliance on and improve conditions in residential placements, 2018-2019.

Served on Steering Committee of the Imagine Different Coalition, a statewide advocacy group that partners with policymakers to ensure youth with disabilities have access to family-based living environments, 2017-2019.

Planned and led “Improving Access to Career Pathways for Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice System-Involved Youth,” a Philadelphia stakeholder workgroup on barriers to career opportunities, April 2017.

Regularly participated in numerous state and local working groups to improve regulations and policies governing Pennsylvania’s child welfare and juvenile justice systems, 2015-2021.

Testimony:

Testified at Congressional briefing on Ending Solitary Confinement in Juvenile Facilities, hosted by Office of Sen. Cory A. Booker, Washington, DC, August 2017.

Public Comments:

Co-authored Juvenile Law Center comments opposing Social Security Administration’s Proposed Rule on the Frequency and Notice of Continuing Disability Reviews (No. SSA-2018-0026, RIN 0960-AI2), Jan. 2020.

Authored Juvenile Law Center comments opposing the Department of Homeland Security’s Proposed Rule on the Apprehension, Processing, Care, and Custody of Alien Minors and Unaccompanied Alien Children (No. ICEB-2018-0002, RIN 0970-AC42 1653-AA75), Nov. 2018.

Regularly submitted comments on proposed state-level regulations affecting youth in the justice and child welfare systems and on the Philadelphia Department of Human Services annual proposed budget.

Selected Media

Karen U. Lindell & Leola Hardy, *Op Ed: Philly Should Reduce Reliance on Institutional Placements for Youth*, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (Nov. 8, 2018). [[Link](#)]

Karen U. Lindell, *Letter to the Editor: Harsh practices aren’t necessary to manage behavior in juvenile facilities*, DES MOINES REGISTER (Aug. 14, 2017). [[Link](#)]

Regular contributor to print and broadcast media on juvenile justice and child welfare topics. Examples:

- Brian Sheehan, *Justice Advocates Want Some Youth Released from Detention Facilities Amid Pandemic*, CBS 21 (Apr. 8, 2020). [[Link](#)]
- Laurel White, *Report: Pepper Spray, Solitary Confinement Continue at Wisconsin’s Youth Prisons*, WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO (Jan. 14, 2019). [[Link](#)]
- Ko A. Bragg, *Solitary Confinement of Youth Used Frequently, Unfairly, New Report Says*, JUVENILE JUSTICE INFORMATION EXCHANGE (Aug. 2, 2017). [[Link](#)]
- Abigail Wilson, *More Sophisticated Transition Planning Needed for Foster Youth with Complex Needs*, THE IMPRINT (Mar. 19, 2016). [[Link](#)]

Honors and Awards

Skadden Fellowship: *Developing legal strategies to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities as they transition out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems*

Vanderbilt University Law School Awards:

Founder’s Medal (for graduating first in class)
Robert F. Jackson Memorial Prize (for maintaining highest GPA over the first two years)
Bennett Douglas Bell Memorial Award (for “the highest conception of ethics in the profession”)
Stanley D. Rose Memorial Book Award (for best paper on jurisprudence or legal history)
VANDERBILT LAW REVIEW Editor’s Award
Scholastic Excellence Awards in Contracts, Juvenile Justice, Evidence, and Actual Innocence
Legal Writing Award for Best Oral Argument
John W. Wade Scholarship (full tuition)

University of Georgia Awards:

Charter Scholarship (merit-based undergraduate award)
Excellence in Undergraduate Research Grant

Bar Admissions and Professional Memberships

Bar Admissions: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, State of New Jersey
Philadelphia Bar Association