

## The Program

### Curriculum

The Kids' Court School was established to help educate children about the courtroom process and to reduce anxiety typically associated with participation in the legal process.



Children participate in two one-hour sessions. The first focuses on the pretrial and trial processes, where they learn about courtroom processes and the roles and functions of courtroom participants. During this session, children also learn communication techniques, including the importance of telling the truth and the ability to ask for clarification during questioning.

Shortly before the trial begins, children participate in the second session, which includes learning the concepts of deep breathing and positive self talk to help reduce anxiety while testifying. They also participate in a mock trial, held in either the Thomas & Mack Moot Court at the William S. Boyd School of Law or the National Judicial College at University of Nevada, Reno.

### Staff

Children are taught by court educators who are law students at the William S. Boyd School of Law or who are undergraduate or graduate students at the University of Nevada, Reno.

### Eligibility

Children between 4 and 17 who are scheduled to appear in court in any capacity – as a witness, victim, or youth charged with a crime – are eligible to participate in the Kids' Court School. Sometimes they are subpoenaed by courts, but don't have to be to participate. Parents or legal guardians also can bring children to the Kids' Court School. There is no charge for participation in the Kids' Court School.

### Location

The Kids' Court School is located at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, William S. Boyd School of Law, Thomas & Mack Legal Clinic. Metered visitor parking is available on the west side of Maryland Parkway at Harmon Avenue.

At the University of Nevada, Reno, Kids' Court School is located at the National Judicial College. There is metered parking in the West Stadium Parking garage next to the Lawlor Events Center.

Educating Nevada's Children and Youth

**Kids' Court School**



Box 451082  
4505 Maryland Parkway  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1082

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**UNLV** | WILLIAM S. BOYD  
**SCHOOL OF LAW**



## THE KIDS' COURT SCHOOL

Educating Nevada's Children and Youth Since 2002



**UNLV** | WILLIAM S. BOYD  
**SCHOOL OF LAW**

**N** University of Nevada, Reno



**The Founder**  
Rebecca Nathanson, Ph.D.

The Kids' Court School was established in 2002 by Rebecca Nathanson, Ph.D., at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law. The program has garnered national recognition as a model for children's courtroom education. It won a Bright Ideas award from Harvard University in 2012 and in 2015 received a U.S. Senatorial Commendation.

Rebecca Nathanson, Ph.D., is the James Rogers Professor of Education and Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She received her doctoral degree in education from the University of California, Santa Barbara and trained in the area of children's testimony as a research fellow at the UCLA School of Medicine. Dr. Nathanson's research examines the capabilities and limitations of child and youth participants in the legal system.

*“That’s really been my mission:  
to enable children to tell their  
story in court.”*

– Professor Rebecca Nathanson, Ph.D.,  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

## The Research

### Courtroom Effects on Children's Anxiety and Memory

In a 2003 study, Drs. Nathanson and Saywitz found that children who were questioned about a past event in a small private room demonstrated a heart rate between 60-120 beats per minute. Children who were questioned in a courtroom, however, demonstrated a heart rate between 60 and 240 beats per minute, indicating a significant increase in stress. This anxiety, coupled with limited knowledge of the legal processes may lead to incomplete, and sometimes inaccurate, testimonies in court.



A 2015 study showed that the Kids' Court School significantly reduces children's anxiety related to participating in the judicial process.



In 2015, the program hosted its 1,000th Child Celebration commemorating educating 1,000 children about the judicial process.

## You and Kids' Court School

Refer clients.  
Enroll your children.  
Give a charitable gift.

**KCS - Las Vegas**  
(702) 895-5933

**KCS - Reno**  
(775) 525-1645

Email: [kidscourt@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:kidscourt@unlv.nevada.edu)  
Website: [law.unlv.edu/kidscourt](http://law.unlv.edu/kidscourt)

The mission of the Kids' Court School is to educate children and youth about the investigative and judicial processes, utilizing a standardized, evidence-based curriculum in order to maintain the integrity of the legal process; to conduct ongoing research aimed at maximizing the capabilities of child witnesses; to minimize the potentially traumatic effects of the courtroom on children; and to serve as a training program regarding best practices for educating children and youth about the judicial process.

*“This is about my life  
and my life is  
important.”*

– 6-year-old victim who participated  
in Kids' Court School

