Midwestern Legislative Conference
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

casey family programs

Child Welfare Policy Academy

Agenda Overview

November 11–13, 2026
Cantigny Park and Golf Club, Wheaton, Illinois
Host hotel: Chicago Marriott Naperville

Wednesday, November 11 | Opening Reception

5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Chicago Marriott Naperville

Welcome reception with food, refreshments, and informal networking.

Thursday, November 12 | Day 1

7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. | Cantigny Park and Golf Club

Transport to Cantigny and breakfast: *Transportation from the host hotel to Cantigny. Buffet breakfast provided.*

Child welfare system overview: Exploration of core missions, financing, performance, and legislative opportunities for system improvement.

Child safety: Discussion of policies, agency culture, and supports that strengthen safety and help families remain together when possible.

State data and peer exchange: State-level data review, facilitated table activity, and discussion of priorities and challenges.

Cross-system partnerships: State examples of coordination among child welfare, health, education, behavioral health, and juvenile justice systems to support at-risk youth.

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. | Granite City Food and Brewery

Evening: Everyone is invited for a complimentary dinner and drinks.

Friday, November 13 | Day 2

7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | Cantigny Park and Golf Club

Transport to Cantigny and breakfast: *Transportation from the host hotel to Cantigny. Buffet breakfast provided.*

Federal policy: Dialogue with federal leadership about shifting federal policy and new opportunities for state innovation.

Improving outcomes while in foster care: Kinship care, placement decisions, visitation, and supports that reduce trauma.

Permanency and stability: Strategies to safely reduce time in care and connect children and youth with permanent families.

Prevention and community models: Local, neighborhood and community-based supports that strengthen families and reduce the need for system involvement.

Closing: Participant reflections, looking forward to policy priorities and next steps.

The detailed working agenda, including speakers, logistics, and session descriptions, will be provided ahead of the event.