Panel 1: Family Defense Lawyering (11:15 – 12:30 pm)

- Carla Laroche, Clinical Professor, Florida State University College of Law, *When the New Jim Crow and Jane Crow Intersect: Analyzing Right to Counsel Limitations in the Dependency System for Mothers Who Are Incarcerated*

- Jessica López-Espino, PhD Candidate – Anthropology, NYU, Doctoral Fellow in Law and Inequality - American Bar Foundation, “Minimally Fit” Parenting is not “Good” Parenting: Challenging Beliefs About Parental Care in Child Welfare Cases

- Melody R. Webb, President, Founder, and Executive Director, Mothers’ Outreach Network, Inc., *Taking a Multifaceted, Empowerment-Centered Approach to Entanglement in the Foster Care System That Focuses on Building Power to Tackle African-American Family Poverty*

- Moderator, Charisa Kiyô Smith, Associate Professor, CUNY School of Law

“Coffee Break” (12:30 – 12:45 pm) (Breakout rooms available to meet with panelists and attendees)

Note: If you wish to assign yourself to one of the many breakout rooms, you must have Zoom Desktop client or mobile app version 5.3.0 or higher or ChromeOS version 5.0.0 (4241.1207) or higher.
Panelists Biographies

Carla Laroche is a clinical professor at the Florida State University College of Law. She directs the Gender and Family Justice Clinic, which focuses on the collateral consequences of incarceration on families. Prior to FSU, Professor Laroche was a criminal justice reform law fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center. Previously, she was a pro bono fellow at Hunton Andrews Kurth and served as a law clerk in the Southern District of Florida. A first-generation Haitian-American, Professor Laroche earned her JD from Columbia Law School; Master’s in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School; and A.B. in History from Princeton University.

Jessica Lopez-Espinó recently defended her dissertation in Anthropology at New York University. Her dissertation, "'Crawling over Broken Glass': The Legal Experience of Child Reunification in a California Child Welfare Court," analyzes the interactions between parents and court professionals as they interactionally shape legal evaluations of parental fitness and determine what would be in children's best interests. Her work draws on anthropology of law, linguistic anthropology, and Critical Race Theory to explore the particular experiences of Spanish-dominant Latinx parents in child welfare courts, the growing trend of Latinx involvement in child welfare, and issues in language access for Spanish-dominant speakers. Jessica is a recipient of the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for doctoral research. She is currently a Law and Inequality Fellow at the American Bar Foundation.
Charisa Smith is an Associate Professor at CUNY School of Law whose work is cited by federal and state courts, agencies, and advocates. Her research addresses criminalization of youth behavior and state overreach into family lives. Smith co-directs the Family Law Practice Clinic and teaches doctrinal courses including Torts and Contemplative Practice. She has represented clients in criminal, civil, and administrative fora, and has worked in Latin America on issues of gender justice and child sexual exploitation. The recipient of numerous distinctions and awards, Smith is a graduate of Yale Law School, Harvard & Radcliffe Colleges, and Wisconsin Law (LL.M).

Melody Webb, Esq., is founder, president and executive director of Mothers' Outreach Network, Inc., which deploys holistic strategies, including education, advocacy, and mutual aid to support Black mothers fighting for economic stability while navigating the foster care or other oppressive legal systems. A former parents’ attorney on the D.C. Superior Court Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect panel, she also advocated for racial equity and economic justice at Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless and at Service Employees International Union, and was Program Director and Professorial Lecturer in Law at George Washington University Law School Legal Clinics. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School and College.