

## **Karen Worthington Bio**

Karen Worthington is a nationally recognized children's law expert working on behalf of court-involved children and children at risk of committing crimes or being victimized. Through her child welfare and juvenile justice consulting and writing business, Worthington helps nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and foundations use research to improve outcomes for children and families. Her work includes policy development, legislative advocacy, research and analysis, strategic partnerships, curriculum development and training delivery, and community outreach and education.

Worthington is a member of the Hawaii Early Childhood Action Strategy Group, Maui Hanai Coalition, a partner in the Ho'oikaika Partnership, a board member of Imua Family Services, an advisory board member of the Pacific Juvenile Defender Center, and a member of the National Association of Counsel for Children and the State Bar of Georgia Children and the Courts Committee. She is licensed to practice law in California and Georgia.

Worthington holds academic appointments as a senior fellow with the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory Law (2003-present), a Global Affiliated Faculty member of the Vulnerability and the Human Condition Initiative at Emory University (2010-present), and Affiliate Faculty with the Matsunaga Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution, College of Social Sciences, University of Hawaii at Manoa (2012-present).

Worthington was the founding director of the Barton Child Law & Policy Center at Emory Law School, a multi-disciplinary children's law center dedicated to improving systems that work with court-involved children and their families in Georgia. During her ten years as Center director, she completed Emory University's first Academic Leadership Program class (2008-2009) and directed the Southern Juvenile Defender Center, a regional support center for attorneys and other professionals defending children accused of breaking the law (2001-2005). She was also a founding board member of the Interfaith Children's Movement, served on the boards of many Georgia organizations including Voices for Georgia's Children and the Georgia Association of Counsel for Children, and participated in numerous interagency reform initiatives and work groups.

Worthington has authored and edited several publications about court-involved children, including the book *What is Right for Children? The Competing Paradigms of Religion and Human Rights*, co-edited with Martha Albertson Fineman, and the policy papers, *Psychotropic Meds for Youth in Foster Care: Who Decides?*, written for the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children and *Secure Detention of Status Offenders: A research-based policy response to the Georgia General Assembly*, co-authored with Darlene Lynch and Randee Waldman.

She received the 2011 Emory Public Interest Committee Inspiration Award for Unsung Devotion to Those Most in Need and the 2009 National Association of Counsel for Children Outstanding Legal Advocacy Award.