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Children's Law Center Leader Addresses 2011 NACC Annual Conference by [Jennifer Orton](#)

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Stephanie Villafuerte, Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center addressed members of the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) at their 34th National Child Welfare, Juvenile, and Family Law Conference.

Villafuerte participated in a panel discussion where she addressed how to set up multidisciplinary offices for child law advocates. Nationally, there are an increasing number of multidisciplinary offices being developed to serve abused children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect.

Villafuerte commented, "a multidisciplinary law office ensures that children in the foster care system receive the necessary mental health, medical care and educational services they need." "Our lawyers work with clinical social workers to make sure that we are addressing every aspect of our child clients lives."

Villafuerte spoke to the NACC audience about how to create and implement a business plan when forming a multidisciplinary office. Villafuerte said, "it takes a great deal of time and planning to start a multidisciplinary law office for children." "One must draft an operating plan, budget, staffing models and create an overall infrastructure."

"This project required me to think about everything from adequate space to house the project to ensuring our staff had the appropriate technology." "It is a very involved process."

The Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center was selected by the Office of the Child Representative as one of three organizations in Colorado to host a multidisciplinary law office. The purpose of the panel discussion was to provide guidance to other child advocates across the country who are interested in starting similar projects in their own states.

Villafuerte said, "this project has required months of planning and work." "My staff has nearly do as have our caseloads." "We want this project to become an exemplary model for the country." "The time we have spent thus far is well worth the effort if it means doing more for our foster youth."

The NACC conference is held each year to education child advocates about best practices in the profession. The three day conference was held in San Diego, California. The NACC's mission is to strengthen the delivery of legal services for children, enhance the quality of legal services affecting children, improve courts and agencies serving children, and advance the rights and interests of children.

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Jennifer Orton is an avid writer who writes on a variety of topics including, but not limited to

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