

**NCJFCJ 68th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JULY 17 - 20, 2005
Pittsburgh, PA**

Resolution No. 9

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PRESUMPTIVELY OPEN
HEARINGS WITH DISCRETION OF COURTS TO CLOSE**

WHEREAS, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges is an organization which identifies problems within our nation's juvenile and family courts and formulates ways of improving practice in order to enhance justice; and

WHEREAS, the National Council seeks a society in which every child and every family in need of judicial oversight has access to fair, effective and timely justice; and

WHEREAS, the nation's juvenile and family courts decide cases involving children and families; and

WHEREAS, these cases focus upon our society's efforts to hold children accountable for their conduct, protect children from abuse and neglect, preserve families, and achieve timely permanency for children; and

WHEREAS, the public has a legitimate and compelling interest in the work of our juvenile and family courts; and

WHEREAS, open court proceedings will increase public awareness of the critical problems faced by juvenile and family courts and by child welfare agencies in matters involving child protection, may enhance accountability in the conduct of these proceedings by lifting the veil of secrecy which surrounds them, and may ultimately increase public confidence in the work of the judges of the nation's juvenile and family courts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, our nation's juvenile and family courts be open to the public except when the juvenile or family court judge determines that the hearing should be closed in order to serve the best interests of the child and/or family members.

Adopted this 20th day of July, 2005
By the Membership Assembled in Conference
In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania