



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### Court releases *The Time is Now* video during Adoption Month

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Chief Justice Robin Jean Davis and Judge Gary L. Johnson of the Twenty-Eighth Judicial Circuit (Nicholas County) spoke at a press conference today in the Supreme Court Chamber about a new video that guides parents through the child abuse and neglect court process. They also emphasized the need for children to have safe, permanent homes, whether with their parents or adoptive families.

*The Time is Now* video takes parents through the child abuse and neglect process under Chapter 49 of the W.Va. Code. The eighteen-minute film explains how the court system and professionals involved make reasonable efforts to work with parents and reunite families. It emphasizes that time is of the essence, and parents' rights may be terminated if it is in their children's best interests.



“In a week, most of us will be spending time with family for Thanksgiving,” Chief Justice Davis said. “While we count our blessings, we cannot forget children who are not so fortunate.

“These foster children are out there twisting in the wind. We want to make a concerted effort to get them to a stable, safe environment,” Chief Justice Davis said.

The video is intended to make the abuse and neglect court process less frightening for families “so they embrace the court system and know we are trying to reunify families. It motivates everybody in the family to work together to solve their problems,” Chief Justice Davis said.

“Keeping families together is the primary goal. Most children want to be with their parents. But that is not always possible,” said Judge Johnson, who is chairman of the West Virginia Court Improvement



**Program. The CIP creates, identifies, and promotes initiatives that make the court system more responsible and efficient in achieving timely, safe, permanent placements for children that ensure their well-being and preserve due process for families.**

**Of the 4,285 children in foster care in West Virginia, more than 1,000 – or about a fourth – are waiting for adoption. Children “waiting for adoption” are age 17 or younger whose parents’ rights have been terminated and/or who have adoption as their permanency plan.**

**Forty-two of the children waiting for adoption are featured on the state’s Adoption Resource Network at [http://www.wvdhhr.org/oss/adoption/wv\\_children.asp](http://www.wvdhhr.org/oss/adoption/wv_children.asp).**

**Judge Johnson urged West Virginians to consider adoption.**

**“You don’t have to be perfect to be a good parent to one or more of these children. You don’t have to be rich, married, own a home, or be of a certain race or age to become an adoptive parent. If you have patience, a good sense of humor, a love of children, and a commitment to be a good parent, you should consider adopting a child from foster care,” Judge Johnson said.**

**National Adoption Month celebrates adoptions of children from foster care and raises awareness of the children who are waiting for permanent homes in West Virginia and the approximately 115,000 children who are waiting nationally.**

***The Time is Now* may be viewed on the Court Improvement Program website, [www.wvcip.com](http://www.wvcip.com) or the Supreme Court of Appeals website, [www.state.wv.us/wvsca](http://www.state.wv.us/wvsca).**

**Anyone who would like a copy of the video may contact the Division of Children’s Services of the Supreme Court at (304) 558-0145.**

***The Time is Now* was paid for by a CIP grant from the federal Administration for Children and Families and matching funds from the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia.**

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