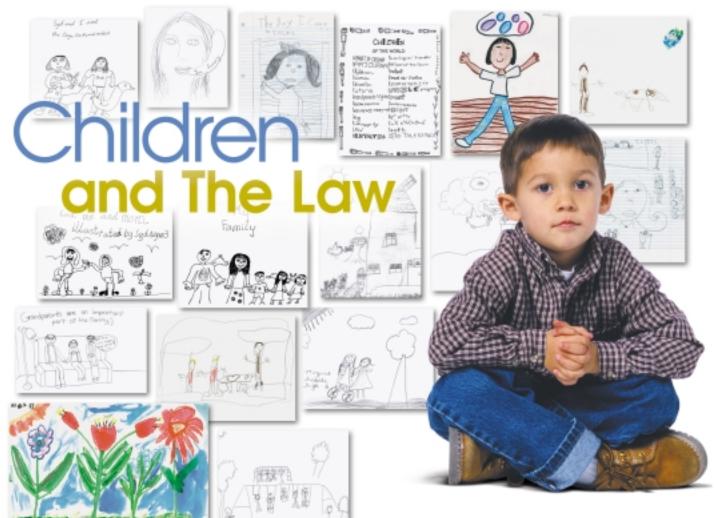
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hildren and the Law. It sounds simple. Necessary too. But this broad area of applicable laws is more subtle and technical than would appear at first blush.

Most attorneys do not specialize in matters affecting children, like custody, abuse and neglect, education, special education, medical insurance coverage, adoption, trusts, parental rights, grandparent rights, guardianships, and so on. But is there one of us who doesn't know a child with a learning disability or attention deficit disorder? Or a child whose parents continue to play out a hostile divorce?

If "children" is not an area of expertise, being able to offer an accurate legal opinion may be seemingly impossible. However, guiding a client, friend, or family member through the morass of procedural, administrative, and legal hoops is essential no matter how difficult or unfamiliar the terrain.

Fortunately, there are often private and public agencies and advocacy groups to lend assistance. More often than not, there is governing state and/or federal legislation. Sometimes, however, this is not the case. For instance, gifted children have no legal right to an appropriate education in Michigan, and health insurers typically don't cover medical treatment for attention deficit disorder and depression on parity with other neurological disorders, like migraines, epilepsy, or Parkinson's.

By focusing on children both in this and in a future issue, we hope that the articles presented will help all of our colleagues, whether they specialize in some facet of the law affecting children, have a client with a question, or simply have children of their own. Featured in this issue are articles on timely, yet traditional topics, such as guardianships, adoption, and grandparent rights. In a future issue will be three articles touching on the interplay between the psychological, medical, and legal aspects of representing children. Several children generously submitted the creative illustrations that are shown above.

In order to bolster our profession's ability to advise those who depend on us, there is also an extensive compendium of resources on the State Bar of Michigan's website at *www. michbar.org/journal/home.cfm* that was meticulously compiled by Shari Fitzpatrick and her staff at the Warren Consolidated School District's Special Education department.

If these two issues improve the life of but one child, then it will have been well worth the effort expended by those involved in its production, to whom I take this opportunity to extend sincere thanks.

> Cynthia Marie-Martinovich Lardner Editor, Colleague, Mother of Four