

# Policy Intern at The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights in New Orleans, Louisiana

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My name is Noa Davies, and I am a freshman studying Political Science with a minor in Strategy, Leadership, and Management.

This past spring, through the Reproductive Rights, Health, and Justice Internship Program, I had the privilege of serving as a Policy Intern at the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR). LCCR is a non-profit organization that provides legal representation to children in the justice system. This internship intrigued me as I am passionate about law and ensuring justice. I enjoyed the combination of providing legal aid and overall community aid that LCCR administers. LCCR provides legal counseling to individuals in the community who are juveniles and juveniles facing life without parole. On the community side, LCCR aims to advance Louisiana state legislation, such as Raise the Age, which switches the age of criminal responsibility from 17 years old to 18 years old.

My role as a Policy Intern included responsibilities that focused on understanding how the representatives of the Louisiana legislature would vote on laws that LCCR supported. One of my main roles was to research all of the current members of the Louisiana legislature, focusing on the House of Representatives. For each, I created a profile through extensive public research in order for LCCR to form better connections with the legislators and understand how they might feel about the legislation before it is put forth. I spent a lot of time researching legal websites, political campaigns, as well as social media to gain a deep understanding of each legislator professionally and personally. I also called lawyers, judges, and others working in the justice system to help LCCR understand their positions on certain legislation. This helped LCCR grasp how much support any new laws involving children in the legal system would have when presented to a court.

Through my internship, I gained diligent and detailed research skills, improved my communication skills, and truly began to understand all of the hard and important work that is to be done within the legal system to aid children. I learned how valuable information can be found online and through legal research. Through various phone calls, I was able to practice quick thinking, interpersonal skills, and active listening when discussing why individuals may or may not support specific legislation. Every person that I met in the office was very welcoming and extremely passionate about reforming the justice system for children. Previous to this internship, I was unaware of how children were processed in the legal system, and I have now gained a better understanding of how overlooked and underserved many children are in our system of justice. This showed me firsthand how hard those representing children in the legal system work not only to protect the specific children they are defending but every child in the justice system.