

# 2018 Illinois CASA State Conference

## Plenary Session Presenters

### Exavier B. Pope I, Esq.

Principal Owner, The Pope Law Firm, P.C.

***Who You Serve Can Be Great and Powerful***



Exavier Pope is the principal owner of The Pope Law Firm, P.C., a premier sports and entertainment, personal injury, and class action law firm. Mr. Pope obtained his Juris Doctor from Rutgers University School of Law. He has a Bachelor of Science in Economics as well as a Finance degree from the University of Illinois Chicago. Mr. Pope is heavily involved in philanthropic endeavors. He serves as a board member of First Star, focusing on increasing 4-year university enrollment of former foster youth, and is the founder of Lily Pad, a non-profit organization which mentors and provides first-class experiences for youth and young adults. Exavier Pope was born on Chicago's South Side. His father was a pimp and his mother, one of his prostitutes. Exavier lived in foster care during most of his young life and was homeless by age 14. Exavier defied the odds. His life mission is to show the world that anything is possible with belief.

### Diana Mendley Rauner

President, Ounce of Prevention Fund

***Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Trauma***



Diana Mendley Rauner is president of the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a public-private partnership that prepares children for success in school and in life. The Ounce believes in starting early to unlock the power of human potential, advancing program and policy efforts interactively to foster systemic change. With an operating budget of approximately \$60 million, the Ounce creates and supports research-based early learning programs for at-risk children and their families from before birth to age five; develops, educates, and coaches practitioners to provide more children with high-quality early education; and advocates and educates policymakers, business and civic leaders. In partnership with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and other national philanthropies, the Ounce has built the Educare Learning Network from one birth-to-five school on the south side of Chicago to a network of 21 schools across the country, and launched the First Five Years Fund, a federally-focused advocacy and communications effort. Diana was appointed president in January 2011, having previously served as a Board member and later as the organization's executive director. Her leadership of the Ounce is informed by her prior experiences in finance and early childhood research. Diana holds a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Chicago, an M.B.A. from the Stanford Graduate School of Business and a B.A. from Yale University.

### Susan Evans

Executive Director, Child Protection Training Academy, College of Public Affairs and Administration, University of Illinois, Springfield

***Attitudes, Assumptions and Beliefs – Changing for the Good***



Susan Evans has 30 years of Child Welfare experience. For 25 years she worked at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, 14 years of which was spent as a Child Protection Investigator. For the past three years, Susan has worked with the University of Illinois Springfield on the redesign of the Child Protection Foundation training. As part of this new curriculum, Susan designed simulations for new investigators, utilizing the UIS/DCFS Residential Simulation Lab and mock courtroom. Susan recently became the Director of the Child Protection Training Academy in a partnership between DCFS and the University of Illinois Springfield. She is also a certified CAST trainer and adjunct for the program at UIS. Susan has a BA in Psychology. She holds certification in Forensic Interviewing, Child Fatality Investigations, and Psychology First Aid.