




Stacie J. Schmerling

Partner

 Fort Lauderdale

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Biography

Stacie J. Schmerling is a Partner and is a Co-Business Unit Leader of the **Justice for Kids** Division, the firm's national practice dedicated to providing legal services to abused, disabled, and catastrophically injured children harmed in foster care, shelters, residential treatment centers, group homes, and other child welfare settings, as well as all children harmed by the acts of others. She practices in the areas of foster care and disabled persons damages, civil rights, personal injury, and child welfare litigation.

She has spent much of her legal career protecting children, especially in cases of foster child abuse, child sexual abuse, child sexual assault, child-on-child sexual abuse and other harm and abuse in the child welfare system. She has helped achieve multi-million dollar damage awards and settlements and usher in systemic change in how governmental and private agencies care for the State's most vulnerable citizens.

Prior to joining Kelley Kronenberg, Stacie and nationally recognized children's rights advocate, Howard Talenfeld, founded Florida's first law firm dedicated to protecting the rights of abused, disabled, and injured children. Stacie was a Partner in the firm and focused on representing children harmed in various child welfare settings. She was also previously an Associate with a prominent Fort Lauderdale law firm in the foster care / disabled persons damages practice area. Prior to becoming an attorney, Stacie dedicated the first ten years of her career to the protection of at-risk children in the child welfare field. As a Child Protective Investigator and supervisor for Broward Sheriff's Officer, her team investigated allegations of child abuse and neglect, provided intervention services to at-risk families and brought serious cases of child abuse and neglect to the dependency court system. In addition, she was a case manager for the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services where she facilitated safety and permanency for abused and neglected children in the state child welfare system.

Stacie earned her Bachelor of Arts degree, *magna cum laude*, from Rowan University and then went on to earn her Jurist Doctor degree, *summa cum laude*, from Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law Center.



Admissions

- Florida
- United States District Court, Southern District of Florida
- United States District Court, Middle District of Florida

Education

- Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law Center, J.D., *summa cum laude*, 2010
- Montclair State University, Child Advocacy Certificate (2002)
- Rowan University, B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1998

Industry Updates

- Featured, "[Florida Trend Legal Elite Notable Women Leaders in Law](#)," *Florida Trend*, December 2024
- [Kelley Kronenberg Attorneys Receive 2021 AV Preeminent Rating from Martindale-Hubbell](#)
- Quoted, "Jury orders Florida to pay \$15 million to Volusia girl tortured by parents," *Orlando Sun Sentinel*, December 2023
- Quoted, "[A baby girl was killed. Now, a trial begins that accuses child-welfare officials of negligence](#)," *Sun Sentinel*, August 2023
- Quoted, "[Police chief sounds alarm on recent child deaths, prompting change to Florida child welfare system](#)," CBS Local WESH2, February 2022
- Quoted, "[Florida confirms flaws with handling of child welfare complaints following USA TODAY story](#)," USA Today, October 2021
- Quoted, "[Mother who lost 11-year-old son to suicide speaks out for the first time](#)," *Spectrum Bay News 9*, September 2021
- Featured, "[Who's Who Women of Influence](#)," *Lifestyle Magazine*, September 2021
- Quoted, "[Volusia sheriff demands action from child protection agencies following shootout with children](#)," *News 6 Orlando*, June 2021
- Quoted, "[Florida foster child sexually abused for 4 years, private agency misses multiple red flags](#)," *The Ledger*, October 2020
- Quoted, "[Teen raped newborn girl in Central Florida foster home, lawsuit says](#)," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 2020
- Quoted, "[3-week-old baby sexually assaulted in Marion County foster home, lawsuit says](#)," *USA Today*, October 2020
- Featured, "[This Broward Woman's Case Could Change the Way Hospitals, DCF Evaluate Disabled Parents](#)," *Daily Business Review*, June 2020
- Featured, "Talenfeld Law Attorneys Featured in 2019 Florida Super Lawyers Magazine Once Again," *Sun-Sentinel*, August 12, 2019
- Featured, "Talenfeld Law Attorneys Featured in 2019 Florida Super Lawyers Magazine Once Again," *Legal Learning Series*, August 9, 2019
- Featured, "Talenfeld Law Attorneys Featured in 2019 Florida Super Lawyers Magazine," *Attorney at Law Magazine*, July 31, 2019

- Featured, "Talenfeld Law Attorneys Featured in 2019 Florida Super Lawyers Magazine Once Again", *CityBizList*, July 31, 2019

Publications

- Author, Florida Bar Examination Study Guide and Selected Answers, March 2011; Stacie's essay on Real Property from the July 2010 Florida Bar Exam was selected for publication.
- Author, "Combating the 'Baby Dumping' Epidemic: A Look at Florida's Safe Haven Law," 33 *Nova L. Rev.* 245, Fall 2008

Professional Associations

- Florida Bar's Legal Needs of Children Committee, Member
- Broward County Bar Association, Member
- Florida Bar, Member
 - The Public Interest Law Section

Community

- Florida's Children First Advisory Board (2014)

Awards

- *Best Lawyers*, "The Best Lawyers in America," Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs, 2024
- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*, Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs, 2023
- *Martindale-Hubbell*, AV® Preeminent™
- *South Florida Legal Guide*, "Top Lawyers," 2020 – 2021
- *Super Lawyers magazine*, Florida "Rising Stars," 2018-2020
- *Daily Business Review*, "Rising Stars," 2015
- *Florida Children's First*, Tracey McPharlin Award, "Unsung Hero," 2015
- *Florida Trend's*, Legal Elite, "Up and Comers," 2014
- Broward Sheriff's Office, Child Protective Investigations Section, Child Investigative Supervisor Employee of the Month, May 2007, June 2004