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DOUGLAS E. ABRAMS

Children and the Law

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CHILDREN AND THE LAW IN A NUTSHELL

FOURTH EDITION

By

SARAH H. RAMSEY

Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professor for
Teaching Excellence and Professor of Law
Syracuse University College of Law

DOUGLAS E. ABRAMS

Associate Professor of Law
University of Missouri School of Law

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*To my parents,
Sibyl Street Ramsey
and Robert Weberg Ramsey,
with love and thanks*

S.H.R.

*To my professors at Wesleyan University (1969–73)
and Columbia University School of Law (1973–76),
with gratitude for helping pave the way*

D.E.A.

PREFACE

This book explores the status, rights and obligations of children throughout the wide range of American law. We have written with an eye toward an audience with diverse needs for a learning tool, a refresher text, or a general reference work. Like our casebook, this text addresses students who seek to learn about children and the law, and perhaps to explore prospects for a career in child advocacy. The text also addresses practitioners who may or may not have taken a juvenile law course, but who are summoned to serve children or parents as retained or appointed counsel, or as participants in law revision efforts. The text also addresses the needs of social services employees, physicians, mental health professionals, and others whose valuable contributions to child advocacy will be more effective with a general understanding of legal doctrine.

Because Nutshells strive to provide a meaningful, yet succinct examination of the law, we examine central legal doctrine with necessary self-imposed limits on extended citations and discussions of particular judicial decisions, legislation, scholarly commentary, and statistical analyses. Readers seeking material beyond these limits might refer to the notes and commentary in our casebook, *Children and the Law: Doctrine, Policy and Practice* (4th ed.

PREFACE

West 2010). To provide interchangeability to facilitate learning and reference, the Nutshell generally follows the casebook's format.

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We anticipate treating new developments in this vibrant field of law in future editions. As we look toward the future, we would welcome suggestions from readers who share our enthusiasm for the field and are kind enough to exchange ideas with us.

SARAH H. RAMSEY
DOUGLAS E. ABRAMS

March 2011

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