



Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division  
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### **District Court Opens American Dreams Playroom for Families Attending Naturalization Ceremonies**

Chicago, Ill. -- In a special ribbon-cutting ceremony officiated by Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois unveiled the "American Dreams Playroom," dedicated play space for families attending naturalization ceremonies at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse.

"We are so thrilled to open the American Dreams Playroom for children and families to play, read, and color on the momentous occasion of a naturalization ceremony," said Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

The District Court converted storage space adjacent to the James Benton Parsons Ceremonial Courtroom, where two to three immigration ceremonies are held each week, into the "American Dreams Playroom" for families with children to play and read while waiting for their naturalization ceremony to begin. Members of the Richard Linn Inn of Courts donated toys, books, and supplies for the space.

"This playroom is dedicated to new citizens, the dreams that brought them to our country, and the dreams they have for their children. We hope children and families now leave our courthouse with the same joy and enthusiasm that we have for their amazing accomplishment of becoming citizens," Judge Pallmeyer added.

Each month, judges for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois administer the Oath of Allegiance to approximately 1,100 new citizens at naturalization ceremonies held at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse. Each new citizen is typically accompanied by close friends and family, often including young children.

Following the opening of the Playroom, District Judge Sara L. Ellis administered the Oath of Allegiance to 98 new citizens from 32 countries.

The Playroom features books in Spanish and English, a multilingual “Welcome” mural, and toys for children of all ages. The Playroom also includes a television monitor running a 2019 episode of the children’s program *Arthur*, in which one of Arthur’s friends, Cheikh, becomes an American citizen and is sworn-in during a naturalization ceremony. *Arthur* is produced by WGBH Boston and Oasis Animation, Inc. The show is presented in greater Chicago by WTTW PBS.

The mission of the Linn Inn is to foster the American Inns of Court’s guiding principles of professionalism, ethics, and civility in the practice of intellectual property law. The Chicago-based Linn Inn is one of the twenty-two American Inns of Court in the U.S. and Japan.

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Above: Chief Judge Pallmeyer offers remarks before cutting the ribbon to the new playroom.



Above: Chief Judge Pallmeyer cuts the ribbon with Lauren Thiel, District Court Public Services Administrator, and Lauren Schwartz of the Richard Linn Inn of Courts.



Above: Chief Judge Pallmeyer colors with kids in the American Dreams Playroom.







Above: Kids watch an episode of *Arthur* in the American Dreams Playroom.

