

Youth Engagement in Court Proceedings

The Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency (Subcommittee) was given the following charge by the Advisory Committee on Children and Families: *Promote expanded and more effective youth engagement in court proceedings.*

The Subcommittee makes the following recommendations:

1. The Supreme Court of Ohio should encourage all courts with juvenile jurisdiction to adopt a local rule regarding meaningful participation of the youth that come before the court as a result of abuse, neglect or dependency. The rule should include the following items:
 - a. Statement that the youth:
 - i. Is a party to all proceedings of which s/he is the subject.
 - ii. Has right to get notice of, and to attend, all proceedings to which s/he is a party.
 - iii. Should be encouraged by adult supporters and court personnel to attend all proceedings.
 - b. Presumption that youth wish to attend all proceedings of which s/he is the subject.
 - c. Alternate ways that the youth may participate in a proceeding of which s/he is the subject.
 - d. Ability of the court to excuse the youth from participation for specified criteria that are outlined within the rule.
2. To support courts' ability to enact a local rule, the Supreme Court of Ohio should distribute the following items to all Ohio's judicial officers with juvenile jurisdiction:
 - a. Model Rule Regarding Youth Attendance at Court Hearings
 - b. Toolkit for Meaningful Youth Engagement in Court Hearings