

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

STATE	CITATION	RELEVANT TEXT
AZ	A.R.S. § 8-525	<p><b>A.</b> Except as otherwise provided pursuant to this section, court proceedings relating to dependent children, permanent guardianship and termination of parental rights are open to the public.</p> <p><b>B.</b> At the first hearing in any dependency, permanent guardianship or termination of parental rights proceeding, the court shall ask the parties if there are any reasons the proceeding should be closed. For good cause shown, the court may order any proceeding to be closed to the public. In considering whether to close the proceeding to the public, the court shall consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whether doing so is in the child's best interests.</li> <li>2. Whether an open proceeding would endanger the child's physical or emotional well-being or the safety of any other person.</li> <li>3. The privacy rights of the child, the child's siblings, parents, guardians and caregivers and any other person whose privacy rights the court determines need protection.</li> <li>4. Whether all parties have agreed to allow the proceeding to be open.</li> <li>5. If the child is at least twelve years of age and a party to the proceeding, the child's wishes.</li> <li>6. Whether an open proceeding could cause specific material harm to a criminal investigation.</li> </ol> <p><b>C.</b> Subject to the requirements of subsection B of this section and § 8-807, subsection F, paragraph 2, a court proceeding relating to child abuse, abandonment or neglect that has resulted in a fatality or near fatality is open to the public.</p> <p><b>D.</b> At the beginning of a hearing that is open to the public, the court shall do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Admonish all attendees that they are prohibited from disclosing any information that may identify the child and the child's siblings, parents, guardians and caregivers, and any other person whose identity will be disclosed during the proceeding.</li> <li>2. Explain contempt of court to all attendees and the possible consequences of violating an order of the court.</li> </ol> <p><b>E.</b> A person who remains in the court after the admonition pursuant to subsection D of this section must abide by the court's order prohibiting disclosure of that information. The court may find a person who fails to do so in contempt of court.</p> <p><b>F.</b> The court may close an open proceeding at any time for good cause shown and after considering the factors prescribed in subsection B of this section.</p> <p><b>G.</b> If a proceeding relating to child abuse, abandonment or neglect that has</p>

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		<p>resulted in a fatality or near fatality has been closed by the court, any person may subsequently request that the court reopen a proceeding or a specific hearing to the public or request a transcript be made of any previously closed proceeding. In ruling on this request, the court shall consider the factors prescribed in subsection B of this section. The person who requested the transcript shall pay the cost of the transcript. If the court grants a request for a transcript of any closed proceeding, the court shall redact from a transcript any information that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is essential to protect the privacy, well-being or safety interests prescribed in subsection B of this section.</li> <li>2. Protects the identity and safety of a person who reports child abuse or neglect and any other person if the court believes that disclosure of the DCS information would be likely to endanger the life or safety of any person.</li> <li>3. The court has received that is confidential by law. The court shall maintain the confidentiality of the information as prescribed in the applicable law.</li> </ol> <p><b>H.</b> Any person may request to inspect court records of a proceeding involving the disclosure of DCS information regarding a case of child abuse, abandonment or neglect that has resulted in a fatality or near fatality. In ruling on this request, the court shall consider the factors prescribed in subsection B of this section. If the court grants the request, the court shall redact any information subject to the requirements of subsections B and G of this section and § 8-807, subsection F, paragraph 2.</p>
CO	Colo. Rev. Stat. § 19-1-106(2)	Hearings may be conducted in an informal manner. The general public shall not be excluded unless the court determines that it is in the best interest of the child or of the community to exclude the general public, and, in such event, the court shall admit only such persons as have an interest in the case or the work of the court, including persons whom the district attorney, the county or city attorney, the child, or the parents, guardian, or other custodian of the child wish to be present.
FL	Fla. Stat. Ann. § 39.507(2)	All hearings, except as provided in this section, shall be open to the public, and a person may not be excluded except on special order of the judge, who may close any hearing to the public upon determining that the public interest or the welfare of the child is best served by so doing.
GA	Ga. Code Ann. § 15-11-78(b), (c)	<p>(b) The general public shall be admitted to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) An adjudicatory hearing involving an allegation of a class A designated felony act or class B designated felony act;</li> <li>(2) An adjudicatory hearing involving an allegation of delinquency brought in the interest of any child who has previously been adjudicated for committing a delinquent act; provided, however, the court shall close any delinquency hearing on an allegation of sexual assault or any delinquency hearing at which any party expects to introduce substantial evidence related to matters of dependency;</li> </ol>

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		<p>(3) Any child support hearing;</p> <p>(4) Any hearing in a legitimation action filed pursuant to Code Section 19-7-22;</p> <p>(5) At the court's discretion, any dispositional hearing involving any proceeding under this article; or</p> <p>(6) Any hearing in a dependency proceeding, except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) of this Code section.</p> <p>(c) The court may close the hearing in a dependency proceeding only upon making a finding upon the record and issuing a signed order stating the reason or reasons for closing all or part of a hearing in such proceeding and stating that:</p> <p>(1) The proceeding involves an allegation of an act which, if done by an adult, would constitute a sexual offense under Chapter 6 of Title 16; or</p> <p>(2) It is in the best interests of the child. In making such a determination, the court shall consider such factors as:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(A) The age of the child alleged or adjudicated as a dependent child;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(B) The nature of the allegations;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(C) The effect that an open court proceeding will have on the court's ability to reunite and rehabilitate the family unit; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(D) Whether the closure is necessary to protect the privacy of a child, of a foster parent or other caretaker of a child, or of a victim of domestic violence.</p> <p>(d) The court may close a hearing or exclude a person from a hearing in any proceeding on its own motion, by motion of a party to the proceeding, or by motion of the child who is the subject of the proceeding or the child's attorney or guardian ad litem.</p> <p>(e) Only the parties, their counsel, witnesses, persons accompanying a party for his or her assistance, the victim, and any other persons as the court finds have a proper interest in the proceeding or in the work of the court may be admitted by the court to hearings from which the public is excluded; provided, however, that when the conduct alleged in the dependency proceeding could give rise to a criminal or delinquent act prosecution, attorneys for the prosecution and the defense shall be admitted.</p> <p>(f) The court may refuse to admit a person to a hearing in any proceeding upon making a finding upon the record and issuing a signed order that the person's presence at the hearing would:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) Be detrimental to the best interests of the child who is a party to the proceeding;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2) Impair the fact-finding process; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(3) Be otherwise contrary to the interest of justice.</p> <p>(g) The court may temporarily exclude any child from a termination of</p>
--	--	--

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		<p>parental rights hearing except while allegations of his or her delinquency or child in need of services conduct are being heard.</p> <p>(h) Any request for installation and use of electronic recording, transmission, videotaping, or motion picture or still photography of any judicial proceeding shall be made to the court at least two days in advance of the hearing. The request shall be evaluated by the court pursuant to the standards set forth in Code Section 15-1-10.1.</p> <p>(i) The judge may order the media not to release identifying information concerning any child or family members or foster parent or other caretaker of a child involved in hearings open to the public.</p> <p>(j) The general public shall be excluded from proceedings in juvenile court unless such hearing has been specified as one in which the general public shall be admitted to pursuant to this Code section.</p>
IN	Ind. Code Ann. § 31-32-6	<p>§ 3. Except as provided in section 4 of this chapter, a delinquency proceeding is open to the public whenever a petition alleging that the child has committed an act that would be murder or a felony if committed by an adult is filed under IC 31-37-10.</p> <p>§ 4. (a) Upon motion of the prosecuting attorney, the child, or the child's guardian ad litem, counsel, parent, guardian, or custodian, the court may issue an order closing a proceeding during the testimony of a child witness or child victim if the court finds that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) an allegation or a defense involves matters of a sexual nature; and</li> <li>(2) closing the proceeding is necessary to protect the welfare of a child witness or child victim.</li> </ul> <p>(b) Upon motion of the prosecuting attorney, the child, or the child's guardian ad litem, counsel, parent, guardian, or custodian, the court may issue an order closing a proceeding during the testimony of a health care provider if the court finds that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) the testimony involves matters that would be protected under 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)); or</li> <li>(2) the testimony involves matters that would be a privileged communication between a health care provider and the health care provider's patient.</li> </ul> <p>(c) Upon motion of the prosecuting attorney, the child, or the child's guardian ad litem, counsel, parent, guardian, or custodian, the court may issue an order closing a proceeding during the testimony of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) certified social worker;</li> <li>(B) certified clinical social worker; or</li> <li>(C) certified marriage and family therapist;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		<p>regarding a client;</p> <p>(2) a school counselor regarding a student; or</p> <p>(3) a school psychologist regarding a student.</p>
IA	Iowa Code § 232.92 (2010)	Hearings held under this division are open to the public unless the court, on the motion of any of the parties or upon the court's own motion, excludes the public. The court shall exclude the public from a hearing if the court determines that the possibility of damage or harm to the child outweighs the public's interest in having an open hearing. Upon closing the hearing to the public, the court may admit those persons who have direct interest in the case or in the work of the court.
MI	Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 712A.17(7)	<p>(7) Upon motion of a party or a victim, the court may close the hearing of a case brought under this chapter to members of the general public during the testimony of a juvenile witness or the victim if the court finds that closing the hearing is necessary to protect the welfare of the juvenile witness or the victim. In determining whether closing the hearing is necessary to protect the welfare of the juvenile witness or the victim, the court shall consider the following:</p> <p>(a) The age of the juvenile witness or the victim.</p> <p>(b) The nature of the proceeding.</p> <p>(c) The desire of the juvenile witness, of the witness's family or guardian, or of the victim to have the testimony taken in a room closed to the public.</p> <p>(8) As used in subsection (7), "juvenile witness" does not include a juvenile against whom a proceeding is brought under section 2(a)(1) of this chapter.</p>
MN	Minn. Stat. § 260C.163(1)(c); Minn. R. of Juv. Protection Pr. 27.04	Absent exceptional circumstances, hearings under this chapter, except hearings in adoption proceedings, are presumed to be accessible to the public, however the court may close any hearing and the records related to any matter as provided in the Minnesota Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure [which state that "The court may exclude from any hearing any party or participant, other than a guardian ad litem or counsel for any party or participant, only if it is in the best interests of the child to do so or the person engages in conduct that disrupts the court. The exclusion of any party or participant from a hearing shall be noted on the record and the reason for the exclusion given. The exclusion of any party or participant shall not prevent the court from proceeding with the hearing or issuing a decision. An order excluding a party or participant from a hearing shall be accessible to the public."].
MO	Mo. Rev. Stat. § 211.319	1. On or before July 1, 2005, all juvenile court proceedings conducted pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection 1 of section 211.031 and for termination of parental rights cases pursuant to sections 211.442 to 211. 487 initiated by a juvenile officer or the division shall be open to the public; except that, when the parent has consented in writing to the termination of his or her parental rights in conjunction with a placement with a licensed child placing agency under subsection 6 of section 453.010, the hearing

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		<p>shall be closed. The court, on its own motion, may exclude for good cause shown any person or persons from the proceedings to protect the welfare and best interests of the child and for exceptional circumstances. Any party to a juvenile court proceeding referred to in this subsection, except the state, may file a motion requesting that the general public be excluded from the proceeding or any portion of the proceeding. Upon the filing of such motion, the court shall hear arguments by the parties, but no evidence, and shall make a determination whether closure is in the best interest of the parties or whether it is in the public interest to deny such motion. The court shall make a finding on the record when a motion to close a hearing pursuant to this section is made and heard by the court.</p> <p>2. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 1 of this section, the general public shall be excluded from all juvenile court proceedings referred to in subsection 1 of this section during the testimony of any child or victim and only such persons who have a direct interest in the case or in the work of the court will be admitted to the proceedings.</p> <p>3. For juvenile court proceedings described in subsection 1 of this section, pleadings and orders of the juvenile court other than confidential files and those specifically ordered closed by the juvenile court judge shall be open to the general public. For purposes of this section, “<b>confidential file</b>” means all other records and reports considered closed or confidential by law, including but not limited to medical reports, psychological or psychiatric evaluations, investigation reports of the children’s division, social histories, home studies, and police reports and law enforcement records. Only persons who are found by the court to have a legitimate interest shall be allowed access to confidential or closed files. In determining whether a person has a legitimate interest, the court shall consider the nature of the proceedings, the welfare and safety of the public, and the interest of any child involved.</p> <p>4. For records made available to the public pursuant to this section:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) The identity of any child involved except the perpetrator shall not be disclosed and all references in such records to the identity of any child involved except the perpetrator shall be redacted prior to disclosure to the public; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2) All information that may identify or lead to the disclosure of the identity of a reporter of child abuse under sections 210.109 to 210.183 and section 352.400 shall not be disclosed to the public.</p> <p>5. The provisions of this section shall apply to juvenile court proceedings and records specified in this section in which the initial pleadings are filed on or after July 1, 2005.</p>
NE	Neb. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 24-1001	All judicial proceedings of all courts established in this state must be open to the attendance of the public unless otherwise specially provided by statute.
NJ	N.J. Ct. Rules,	<b>(a) Hearings on Welfare or Status of a Child.</b> Except as otherwise provided by rule or statute requiring full or partial in camera proceedings,

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

	R 5:3-2	<p>the court, in its discretion, may on its own or party's motion direct that any proceeding or severable part thereof involving the welfare or status of a child be conducted in private. In the child's best interests, the court may further order that a child not be present at a hearing or trial unless the testimony, which may be taken privately in chambers or under such protective orders as the court may provide, is necessary for the determination of the matter. A verbatim record shall, however, be made of all in camera proceedings, including in-chamber testimony by or interrogation of a child.</p> <p><b>(b) Sealing of Records.</b> The court, upon demonstration of good cause and notice to all interested parties, shall have the authority to order that a Family Part file, or any portion thereof, be sealed.</p>
NY	N.Y. Fam. Ct. Act § 1043	The general public may be excluded from any hearing under this article and only such persons and the representatives of authorized agencies admitted thereto as have an interest in the case.
NC	N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-801	<p>(a) At any hearing authorized or required under this Subchapter, the court in its discretion shall determine whether the hearing or any part of the hearing shall be closed to the public. In determining whether to close the hearing or any part of the hearing, the court shall consider the circumstances of the case, including, but not limited to, the following factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The nature of the allegations against the juvenile's parent, guardian, custodian or caretaker;</li> <li>(2) The age and maturity of the juvenile;</li> <li>(3) The benefit to the juvenile of confidentiality;</li> <li>(4) The benefit to the juvenile of an open hearing; and</li> <li>(5) The extent to which the confidentiality afforded the juvenile's record pursuant to G.S. 132-1.4(1) and G.S. 7B-2901 will be compromised by an open hearing.</li> </ol> <p>(b) No hearing or part of a hearing shall be closed by the court if the juvenile requests that it remain open.</p> <p>(b1) Nothing in this Subchapter precludes the court in an abuse, neglect, or dependency proceeding from entering a consent adjudication order, disposition order, review order, or permanency planning order when each of the following apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) All parties are present or represented by counsel, who is present and authorized to consent.</li> <li>(2) The juvenile is represented by counsel.</li> <li>(3) The court makes sufficient findings of fact.</li> </ol> <p>(c) The adjudicatory hearing shall be held in the district at such time and place as the chief district court judge shall designate, but no later than 60 days from the filing of the petition unless the judge pursuant to G.S. 7B-</p>

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		803 orders that it be held at a later time.
OH	Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2151.35(A)(1)	. . . The court may exclude the general public from its hearings in a particular case if the court holds a separate hearing to determine whether that exclusion is appropriate. If the court decides that exclusion of the general public is appropriate, the court still may admit to a particular hearing or all of the hearings relating to a particular case those persons who have a direct interest in the case and those who demonstrate that their need for access outweighs the interest in keeping the hearing closed. . . .
OR	Or. Const. art. 1, § 10	No court shall be secret, but justice shall be administered, openly and without purchase, completely and without delay, and every man shall have remedy by due course of law for injury done him in his person, property, or reputation.
PA	42 Pa. C.S.A. § 6336(e)	<p><b>(d) Proceeding in camera.</b>--Except in hearings to declare a person in contempt of court and in hearings as specified in subsection (e), the general public shall be excluded from hearings under this chapter. Only the parties, their counsel, witnesses, the victim and counsel for the victim, other persons accompanying a party or a victim for his or her assistance, and any other person as the court finds have a proper interest in the proceeding or in the work of the court shall be admitted by the court. The court may temporarily exclude the child from the hearing except while allegations of his delinquency are being heard.</p> <p><b>(e) Open proceedings.</b>--The general public shall not be excluded from any hearings under this chapter:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) Pursuant to a petition alleging delinquency where the child was 14 years of age or older at the time of the alleged conduct and the alleged conduct would be considered a felony if committed by an adult.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2) Pursuant to a petition alleging delinquency where the child was 12 years of age or older at the time of the alleged conduct and where the alleged conduct would have constituted one or more of the following offenses if committed by an adult:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(i) Murder.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(ii) Voluntary manslaughter.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(iii) Aggravated assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2702(a)(1) or (2) (relating to aggravated assault).</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(iv) Arson as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3301(a)(1) (relating to arson and related offenses).</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(v) Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(vi) Kidnapping</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(vii) Rape.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(viii) Robbery as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3701(a)(1)(i), (ii) or (iii) (relating to robbery).</p>



## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		<p>(ix) Robbery of motor vehicle</p> <p>(x) Attempt or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses in this paragraph.</p> <p>Notwithstanding anything in this subsection, the proceedings shall be closed upon and to the extent of any agreement between the child and the attorney for the Commonwealth.</p>
TX	Tex. Fam. Code Ann. § 105.003 (a), (b)	<p>(a) Except as otherwise provided by this title, proceedings shall be as in civil cases generally.</p> <p>(b) On the agreement of all parties to the suit, the court may limit attendance at the hearing to only those persons who have a direct interest in the suit or in the work of the court.</p>
UT	Utah Code Ann. § 78A-6-114 (1)	<p>(a)(i) In abuse, neglect, and dependency cases the court shall admit any person to a hearing, including a hearing under <a href="#">Section 78A-6-322</a>, unless the court makes a finding upon the record that the person's presence at the hearing would:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(A) be detrimental to the best interest of a child who is a party to the proceeding;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(B) impair the fact-finding process; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(C) be otherwise contrary to the interests of justice.</p> <p>(ii) The court may exclude a person from a hearing under Subsection (1)(a)(i) on its own motion or by motion of a party to the proceeding.</p> <p>(b) In delinquency cases the court shall admit all persons who have a direct interest in the case and may admit persons requested by the parent or legal guardian to be present. The court shall exclude all other persons except as provided in Subsection (1)(c).</p> <p>(c) In delinquency cases in which the minor charged is 14 years of age or older, the court shall admit any person unless the hearing is closed by the court upon findings on the record for good cause if:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) the minor has been charged with an offense which would be a felony if committed by an adult; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(ii) the minor is charged with an offense that would be a class A or B misdemeanor if committed by an adult, and the minor has been previously charged with an offense which would be a misdemeanor or felony if committed by an adult.</p>
WA	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 13.34.115	<p>(1) All hearings shall be public, and conducted at any time or place within the limits of the county, except if the judge finds that excluding the public is in the best interests of the child.</p> <p>(2) Either parent, or the child's attorney or guardian ad litem, may move to close a hearing at any time. If the judge finds that it is in the best interests of the child the court shall exclude the public.</p> <p>(3) If the public is excluded from the hearing, the following people may</p>

## State Laws on Public Access to Juvenile Proceedings

		<p>attend the closed hearing unless the judge finds it is not in the best interests of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) The child's relatives;</li><li>(b) The child's foster parents if the child resides in foster care; and</li><li>(c) Any person requested by the parent.</li></ul> <p>(4) Stenographic notes or any device which accurately records the proceedings may be required as provided in other civil cases pursuant to RCW 2.32.200.</p> <p>(5) Any video recording of the proceedings may be released pursuant to RCW 13.50.100, however, the video recording may not be televised, broadcast, or further disseminated to the public.</p>
--	--	--