

State of North Carolina v. Charles Boyd 07 CRS 70271-2

Child Support Witness (State by State)

State	Age of Witness	Child Sexual Abuse	Sit in lap/beside or near	Support witness allowed
Georgia	9 7	Yes Yes	Stand behind Sit in lap	Grandmother Mother
North Carolina	5	No	Sit in lap	Step-mother (mother was murdered)
Indiana	8 (mentally handicapped)	Yes	Sit "with" Sit two or three feet behind	Surrogate guardian "support person"
Arkansas	7	Yes	Stand next to	Social worker
Kansas	6 & 8	Yes	"sit in close proximity"	Mother
Connecticut	6	Yes	Sit "by"	Guardian Ad Litem
Florida	9	Yes	Sit "by"	Guardian Ad Litem
Utah	9	Yes	Sit "near"	"victim support representative"
Pennsylvania	4	Yes	Sit in lap	Grandmother
Oregon	5	Yes	Sit in lap	Foster mother
West Virginia	6	Yes	Sit in lap	Foster mother (had previously testified without help in hearing)
Oklahoma	7	Yes	Stand beside and hold hand	Mother
Ohio	8	Yes	Sit in lap	Aunt

Hawaii: has a contrary ruling, which the New Jersey court finds to be contrary "to the great majority of the reported decisions throughout the United States"

Other Jurisdictions which have codified this practice (statutes to follow)

Jurisdiction	Authority	Age of Child	Who can be present	Where support person can be
Federal Code	18 USC § 3509	“child” (person under the age of 18)	“adult attendant”	“in close proximity”; can hold hand or sit in close proximity
California				
Idaho	§ 19-3023	“child” (under the age of 10)	“parents, counselor, friend or other having a supportive relationship with the child”	“at the witness stand”
Michigan	§ 600.2163a(4)	“witness” (under the age of 16)	“sit with, accompany, or be in close proximity”	“support person”
North Dakota	§ 12.1-35-05.1	Child under 14	“sit with, accompany, or be in close proximity to that witness”	“an individual selected by the court”

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

FEDERAL CODE

18 USC § 3509. Child victims' and child witnesses' rights

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section--

(1) the term "adult attendant" means an adult described in subsection (i) who accompanies a child throughout the judicial process for the purpose of providing emotional support;

(2) the term "child" means a person who is **under the age of 18**, who is or is alleged to be--

(A) a victim of a crime of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or exploitation; or

(B) a witness to a crime committed against another person;

(3) the term "child abuse" means the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or negligent treatment of a child;

(4) the term "physical injury" includes lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe bruising or serious bodily harm;

(5) the term "mental injury" means harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning which may be exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or outward aggressive behavior, or a combination of those behaviors, which may be demonstrated by a change in behavior, emotional response, or cognition;

(6) the term "exploitation" means child pornography or child prostitution;

(7) the term "multidisciplinary child abuse team" means a professional unit composed of representatives from health, social service, law enforcement, and legal service agencies to coordinate the assistance needed to handle cases of child abuse;

(8) the term "sexual abuse" includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in, or assist another

person to engage in, sexually explicit conduct or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children;

(9) the term "sexually explicit conduct" means actual or simulated--

(A) sexual intercourse, including sexual contact in the manner of genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal contact, whether between persons of the same or of opposite sex; sexual contact means the intentional touching, either directly or through clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person with an intent to abuse, humiliate, harass, degrade, or arouse or gratify sexual desire of any person;

(B) bestiality;

(C) masturbation;

(D) lascivious exhibition of the genitals or pubic area of a person or animal; or

(E) sadistic or masochistic abuse;

(10) the term "sex crime" means an act of sexual abuse that is a criminal act;

(11) the term "negligent treatment" means the failure to provide, for reasons other than poverty, adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child; and

(12) the term "child abuse" does not include discipline administered by a parent or legal guardian to his or her child provided it is reasonable in manner and moderate in degree and otherwise does not constitute cruelty.

(13) [Redesignated]

(i) Adult attendant. A child testifying at or attending a judicial proceeding shall have the right to be accompanied by an adult attendant to provide emotional support to the child. The court, at its discretion, may allow the adult attendant to remain in close physical proximity to or in contact with the child while the child testifies. The court may allow the adult attendant to hold the child's hand or allow the child to sit on the adult attendant's lap throughout the course of the proceeding. An adult attendant shall not provide the child with an answer to any question directed to the child during the course of the child's testimony or otherwise prompt the child. The image of the child attendant, for the time the child is testifying or being deposed, shall be recorded on videotape.

CALIFORNIA CODE

868. The examination shall be open and public. However, upon the request of the defendant and a finding by the magistrate that exclusion of the public is necessary in order to protect the defendant's right to a fair and impartial trial, the magistrate shall exclude from the examination every person except the clerk, court reporter and bailiff, the prosecutor and his or her counsel, the Attorney General, the district attorney of the county, the investigating officer, the officer having custody of a prisoner witness while the prisoner is testifying, the defendant and his or her counsel, the officer having the defendant in custody, and a person chosen by the prosecuting witness who is not himself or herself a witness but who is present to provide the prosecuting witness moral support, provided that the person so chosen shall not discuss prior to or during the preliminary examination the testimony of the prosecuting witness with any person, other than the prosecuting witness, who is a witness in the examination. Upon motion of the prosecution, members of the alleged victim's family shall be entitled to be present and seated during the examination.

The court shall grant the motion unless the magistrate finds that the exclusion is necessary to protect the defendant's right to a fair and impartial trial, or unless information provided by the defendant or noticed by the court establishes that there is a reasonable likelihood that the attendance of members of the alleged victim's family poses a risk of affecting the content of the testimony of the victim or any other witness. The court shall admonish members of the alleged victim's family who are present and seated during the examination not to discuss any testimony with family members, witnesses, or the public. Nothing in this section shall affect the exclusion of witnesses as provided in Section 867 of the **Penal Code**.

For purposes of this section, members of the alleged victim's family shall include the alleged victim's spouse, parents, legal guardian, children, or siblings.

868.5. (a) Notwithstanding any other law, a prosecuting witness in a case involving a violation of Section 187, 203, 205, 207, 211, 215, 220, 240, 242, 243.4, 245, 261, 262, 273a, 273d, 273.5, 273.6, 278, 278.5, 285, 286, 288, 288a, 288.5, 289, or 647.6, or former Section 277 or 647a, or a violation of subdivision (1) of Section 314, shall be entitled, for support, to the attendance of up to two persons of his or her own choosing, one of whom may be a witness, at the preliminary hearing and at the trial, or at a juvenile court proceeding, during the testimony of the prosecuting witness. Only one of those support persons may accompany the witness to the witness stand, although the other may remain in the courtroom during the witness' testimony. The person or persons so chosen shall not be a person described in Section 1070 of the Evidence **Code** unless the person or persons are related to the prosecuting witness as a parent, guardian, or sibling and do not make notes during the hearing or proceeding.

(b) If the person or persons so chosen are also prosecuting witnesses, the prosecution shall present evidence that the person's attendance is both desired by the prosecuting witness for support and will be helpful to the prosecuting witness. Upon that showing, the court shall grant the request unless information presented by the defendant or noticed by the court establishes that the support person's attendance during the testimony of the prosecuting witness would pose a substantial risk of influencing or affecting the content of that testimony. In the case of a juvenile court proceeding, the judge shall inform the support person or persons that juvenile court proceedings are confidential and may not be discussed with anyone not in attendance at the proceedings. In all cases, the judge shall admonish the support person or persons to not prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing in this section shall preclude a court from exercising its discretion to remove a person from the courtroom whom it believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.

(c) The testimony of the person or persons so chosen who are also prosecuting witnesses shall be presented before the testimony of the prosecuting witness. The prosecuting witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony. Whenever the evidence given by that person or those persons would be subject to exclusion because it has been given before the corpus delicti has been established, the evidence shall be admitted subject to the court's or the defendant's motion to strike that evidence from the record if the corpus delicti is not later established by the testimony of the prosecuting witness.

IDAHO STATUTE

TITLE 19 CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CHAPTER 30 WITNESSES IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

19-3024. STATEMENTS BY CHILD. Statements made by a child under the age of **ten (10) years** describing any act of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or other criminal conduct committed with or upon the child, although not otherwise admissible by statute or court rule, are admissible in evidence after a proper foundation has been laid in accordance with the Idaho rules of evidence in any proceedings under the child protective act, chapter 16, title 16, Idaho Code, or in any criminal proceedings in the courts of the state of Idaho if:

1. The court finds, in a hearing conducted outside the presence of the jury that the time, content, and circumstances of the statements provide sufficient indicia of reliability; and
- (2) The child either:
 - (a) Testifies at the proceedings; or
 - (b) Is unavailable as a witness. A child is unavailable as a witness when the child is unable to be present or to testify at the hearing because of death or then existing physical or mental illness or infirmity. Provided, that when the child is unavailable as a witness, such statements may be admitted only if there is corroborative evidence of the act.

Statements may not be admitted unless the proponent of the statements notifies the adverse party of his intention to offer the statements and the particulars of the statements sufficiently in advance of the proceedings to provide the adverse party with a fair opportunity to prepare to meet the statements.

MICHIGAN STATUTE

CHAPTER 600 REVISED JUDICATURE ACT OF 1961 REVISED JUDICATURE ACT OF 1961 CHAPTER 21. EVIDENCE

MCLS § 600.2163a (2008) MCL § 600.2163a

§ 600.2163a. Definitions; prosecutions and proceedings to which section applicable; use of dolls or mannequins; support person; notice; videorecorded statement; special arrangements to protect welfare of witness; videotape deposition; section additional to other protections or procedures; violation as misdemeanor; penalty.

Sec. 2163a. (1) As used in this section:

(a) "Custodian of the videorecorded statement" means the family independence agency, investigating law enforcement agency, prosecuting attorney, or department of attorney general or another person designated under the county protocols established as required by section 8 of the child protection law, 1975 PA 238, [MCL 722.628](#).

(b) "Developmental disability" means that term as defined in section 100a of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, [MCL 330.1100a](#), except that, for the purposes of implementing this section, developmental disability includes only a condition that is attributable to a mental impairment or to a combination of mental and physical impairments and does not include a condition attributable to a physical impairment unaccompanied by a mental impairment.

(c) "Videorecorded statement" means a witness's statement taken by a custodian of the videorecorded statement as provided in subsection (5). Videorecorded statement does not include a videorecorded deposition taken as provided in subsections (17) and (18).

(d) "Witness" means an alleged victim of an offense listed under subsection (2) who is either of the following:

(i) A person **under 16 years of age**.

(ii) A person 16 years of age or older with a developmental disability.

(2) This section only applies to prosecutions and proceedings under section 136b, 145c, 520b to 520e, or 520g of the Michigan penal code, 1931 PA 328, [MCL 750.136b](#), [750.145c](#), [750.520b](#) to [750.520e](#), and [750.520g](#), or under former section 136 or 136a of the Michigan penal code, 1931 PA 328.

(3) If pertinent, the witness shall be permitted the use of dolls or mannequins, including, but not limited to, anatomically correct dolls or mannequins, to assist the witness in testifying on direct and cross-examination.

(4) A witness who is called upon to testify shall be permitted to have a support person sit with, accompany, or be in close proximity to the witness during his or her testimony. A notice of intent to use a support person shall name the support person, identify the relationship the support person has with the witness, and give notice to all parties to the proceeding that the witness may request that the named support person sit with the witness when the witness is called upon to testify during any stage of the proceeding. The notice of intent to use a named support person shall be filed with the court and shall be served upon all parties to the proceeding. The court shall rule on a motion objecting to the use of a named support person before the date at which the witness desires to use the support person.

(5) A custodian of the videorecorded statement may take a witness's videorecorded statement before the normally scheduled date for the defendant's preliminary examination. The videorecorded statement shall state the date and time that the statement was taken; shall identify the persons present in the room and state whether they were present for the entire videorecording or only a portion of the videorecording; and shall show a time clock that is running during the taking of the videorecorded statement.

(6) A videorecorded statement may be considered in court proceedings only for 1 or more of the following:

(a) It may be admitted as evidence at all pretrial proceedings, except that it may not be introduced at the preliminary examination instead of the live testimony of the witness.

(b) It may be admitted for impeachment purposes.

(c) It may be considered by the court in determining the sentence.

(d) It may be used as a factual basis for a no contest plea or to supplement a guilty plea.

(7) In a videorecorded statement, the questioning of the witness should be full and complete; shall be in accordance with the forensic interview protocol implemented as required by section 8 of the child protection law, 1975 PA 238, [MCL 722.628](#); and, if appropriate for the witness's developmental level, shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following areas:

(a) The time and date of the alleged offense or offenses.

- (b) The location and area of the alleged offense or offenses.
- (c) The relationship, if any, between the witness and the accused.
- (d) The details of the offense or offenses.
- (e) The names of any other persons known to the witness who may have personal knowledge of the alleged offense or offenses.

(8) A custodian of the videorecorded statement may release or consent to the release or use of a videorecorded statement or copies of a videorecorded statement to a law enforcement agency, an agency authorized to prosecute the criminal case to which the videorecorded statement relates, or an entity that is part of county protocols established under section 8 of the child protection law, 1975 PA 238, [MCL 722.628](#). The defendant and, if represented, his or her attorney has the right to view and hear a videorecorded statement before the defendant's preliminary examination. Upon request, the prosecuting attorney shall provide the defendant and, if represented, his or her attorney with reasonable access and means to view and hear the videorecorded statement at a reasonable time before the defendant's pretrial or trial of the case. In preparation for a court proceeding and under protective conditions, including, but not limited to, a prohibition on the copying, release, display, or circulation of the videorecorded statement, the court may order that a copy of the videorecorded statement be given to the defense.

(9) If authorized by the prosecuting attorney in the county in which the videorecorded statement was taken, a videorecorded statement may be used for purposes of training the custodians of the videorecorded statement in that county on the forensic interview protocol implemented as required by section 8 of the child protection law, 1975 PA 238, [MCL 722.628](#).

(10) Except as provided in this section, an individual, including, but not limited to, a custodian of the videorecorded statement, the witness, or the witness's parent, guardian, guardian ad litem, or attorney, shall not release or consent to release a videorecorded statement or a copy of a videorecorded statement.

(11) A videorecorded statement that becomes part of the court record is subject to a protective order of the court for the purpose of protecting the privacy of the witness.

(12) A videorecorded statement shall not be copied or reproduced in any manner except as provided in this section. A videorecorded statement is exempt from disclosure under the freedom of information act, 1976 PA 442, [MCL 15.231](#) to [15.246](#), is not subject to release under another statute, and is not subject to disclosure under the Michigan court rules governing discovery. This section does not prohibit the production or release of a transcript of a videorecorded statement.

(13) If, upon the motion of a party made before the preliminary examination, the court finds on the record that the special arrangements specified in subsection (14) are necessary to protect the welfare of the witness, the court shall order those special arrangements. In determining whether it is necessary to protect the welfare of the witness, the court shall consider all of the following:

- (a) The age of the witness.
- (b) The nature of the offense or offenses.
- (c) The desire of the witness or the witness's family or guardian to have the testimony taken in a room closed to the public.

(14) If the court determines on the record that it is necessary to protect the welfare of the witness and grants the motion made under subsection (13), the court shall order both of the following:

(a) All persons not necessary to the proceeding shall be excluded during the witness's testimony from the courtroom where the preliminary examination is held. Upon request by any person and the payment of the appropriate fees, a transcript of the witness's testimony shall be made available.

(b) In order to protect the witness from directly viewing the defendant, the courtroom shall be arranged so that the defendant is seated as far from the witness stand as is reasonable and not directly in front of the witness stand. The defendant's position shall be located so as to allow the defendant to

hear and see the witness and be able to communicate with his or her attorney.

(15) If upon the motion of a party made before trial the court finds on the record that the special arrangements specified in subsection (16) are necessary to protect the welfare of the witness, the court shall order those special arrangements. In determining whether it is necessary to protect the welfare of the witness, the court shall consider all of the following:

- (a) The age of the witness.
- (b) The nature of the offense or offenses.
- (c) The desire of the witness or the witness's family or guardian to have the testimony taken in a room closed to the public.

(16) If the court determines on the record that it is necessary to protect the welfare of the witness and grants the motion made under subsection (15), the court shall order 1 or more of the following:

- (a) All persons not necessary to the proceeding shall be excluded during the witness's testimony from the courtroom where the trial is held. The witness's testimony shall be broadcast by closed-circuit television to the public in another location out of sight of the witness.
- (b) In order to protect the witness from directly viewing the defendant, the courtroom shall be arranged so that the defendant is seated as far from the witness stand as is reasonable and not directly in front of the witness stand. The defendant's position shall be the same for all witnesses and shall be located so as to allow the defendant to hear and see all witnesses and be able to communicate with his or her attorney.
- (c) A questioner's stand or podium shall be used for all questioning of all witnesses by all parties and shall be located in front of the witness stand.

(17) If, upon the motion of a party or in the court's discretion, the court finds on the record that the witness is or will be psychologically or emotionally unable to testify at a court proceeding even with the benefit of the protections afforded the witness in subsections (3), (4), (14), and (16), the court shall order that a videorecorded deposition of a witness shall be taken to be admitted at a court proceeding instead of the witness's live testimony.

(18) For purposes of the videorecorded deposition under subsection (17), the witness's examination and cross-examination shall proceed in the same manner as if the witness testified at the court proceeding for which the videorecorded deposition is to be used, and the court shall order that the witness, during his or her testimony, shall not be confronted by the defendant but shall permit the defendant to hear the testimony of the witness and to consult with his or her attorney.

(19) This section is in addition to other protections or procedures afforded to a witness by law or court rule.

(20) A person who intentionally releases a videorecorded statement in violation of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00, or both.

NORTH DAKOTA CENTURY CODE

12.1-35-05.1. Assistance during proceedings.

Upon request of a **witness** who is under the age of fourteen, the court shall permit an individual selected by the court to sit with, accompany, or be in close proximity to the **witness** in order to provide support to the **witness** while that **witness** is giving testimony. In order to provide support to a **witness** who is fourteen years of age or older, while that **witness** is giving testimony, the court may permit an individual selected by the court to sit with, accompany, or be in close proximity to that **witness**.