



In the Court of Common Pleas
Lucas County, Ohio
Juvenile Division

REVISED VOICES PROCEDURES

1. The GAL will inform all youth, age 10 and older, of the opportunity to attend court and to speak to the judge or magistrate at any hearing after the Adjudication Hearing. The GAL will prepare the youth for the hearing.
2. The GAL will have the child sign the court's form acknowledging the opportunity to attend the hearing. Immediately prior to the Adjudication/Disposition Hearing ("A/D Hearing") and each subsequent hearing, the Court shall hold a preliminary discussion with the GAL and attorneys of record at which time the GAL will deliver and discuss the signed form with the judge or magistrate assigned to the case.
3. If a full agreement is reached at mediation, the A/D Hearing will be vacated only if the children are less than 10 years of age. If any child is age 10 or older, the A/D Hearing shall become an A/D VOICES Hearing at which the youth shall have the opportunity to attend and speak to the Court. The Court may vacate an A/D VOICES Hearing if the GAL notifies the Court that the youth has been advised of the opportunity to attend and has signed the form indicating refusal to attend. The GAL shall deliver the signed form to the judge or magistrate.
3. Any party may request of the Court the appearance of a child under the age of 10. The request must be supported with information sufficient for the Court to make a decision about the attendance of the child.
4. A child over the age of 10 with diminished mental capacity may be excused from the hearing by the Court upon the filing of a motion by LCCS or any other party requesting the excusal of the child from the hearing and setting forth the reasons for the request.
5. LCCS will be responsible for getting the youth to the hearings. If youth will be present at the hearing who cannot be left unattended in the courtroom hallway, LCCS will be responsible for arranging for a foster parent or other adult to be present to sit with the youth.
6. The GAL will contact the caseworker within one week of the scheduled hearing to verify the attendance or non-attendance of the child at the hearing so that the caseworker can make the arrangements specified in number 5 above.
7. The child will not be part of an evidentiary hearing. The child's sensitivity to being in the presence of any party shall be considered by the Court prior to asking the youth to speak to the Court.
8. Youth shall have the option of sitting in the courtroom hallway during the hearing, sitting in the courtroom and remaining silent, and addressing the Court, as the youth chooses.
9. Youth shall be seated with the GAL, hopefully at a separate table for that purpose, or with the GAL in the back of the courtroom so that the youth does not have to choose to align with either parent.