

24.13 Panel Reviews.

(a) Case Review. A judicial citizen review panel may elect to hear from any person who formally requests to be heard during a foster care case review, as long as such person has specific knowledge of the case and can assist the panel in the review process. Parents and children may be accompanied to the review by a representative of their choice and such representative may be permitted to provide information.

(b) Presence of the Child. In the case where a child is present, any panel member may request of the chairperson that the panel members, Council staff, and other persons meet privately with the child if it is determined that this would facilitate the child's ability to communicate with the panel members.

(c) Persons Who Shall Receive Notice of Reviews. The following persons shall be given written notice of the judicial citizen review panel reviews: the parents, the child, Council staff, DFCS staff, any preadoptive parent or relative providing care for the child, and foster parents.

(d) Persons Who May Participate in Reviews. The following persons may participate in judicial citizen review panel reviews at the invitation of the panel: family members of the child, legal counsel retained by the parent(s) or appointed by the court for the child, and professionals and other citizens having specific knowledge of the case or special expertise which would benefit the panel review process.

(e) Exclusion from the Review. The panel chairperson may remove any person from any review on his or her initiative or at the request of any participant if the panel chairperson determines that such removal is necessary for an orderly and thorough review of the case.

(f) Oath of Confidentiality. Prior to participating in a judicial citizen review panel review, each person shall affirm by oath that he or she shall keep confidential all information disclosed during the panel review and any information related to the case and that such information may be disclosed only when authorized by law. In the event that any person violates the oath of confidentiality, such person shall be subject to the contempt powers of the court as provided by law.