

may exclude from the hearing room any persons who have no direct interest in the case. Hearings shall be conducted so as to do substantial justice according to the rules of substantive law, and without regard to the technical rules of practice, procedure, pleading, or evidence, except such provisions as relate to privileged communications.

844. Upon hearing of any petition, if the Judge determines that the child is not within his jurisdiction, and is not in need of care or treatment within the provisions or intent of this sub-title, he shall dismiss the case. If he determines that the child is within his jurisdiction, he may place the child for such period of time as he shall determine, but not beyond the minority of the child, on probation, or in the custody of a public or private institution or agency or in the custody of a person designated by the Judge; provided that after any such placement the Judge or his successor in office shall have the right to modify the original order, and make any other order concerning such child which he has power to make. In placing a child committed to the custody of a person, agency, or institution, the placement shall be made, wherever practicable, with a person, agency, or institution of or governed by persons of the same religious faith as that of the parents of the child, or if the parents are of different religious faith, then of the religious faith of the child, or if that is not ascertainable, then of the religious faith of either of the parents. The agency, institution, or person having custody shall submit quarterly to the Judge a report on each child so committed by the Judge. Said report shall set forth particulars as to the type and length of care and treatment already given and contemplated with respect to such child, with reasons therefor.

No adjudication by the Judge upon the status of any child shall operate to impose any civil disabilities, nor shall be considered as a finding of guilt, nor shall any child be deemed a criminal by reason of such adjudication. The proceedings with reference to any child or any evidence given before the Judge shall not be admissible as evidence against the child in any case or proceedings in any other court. Records of the Court shall not be open to inspection by the general public.

At any stage of any proceedings before him, the Judge may suspend sentence, final judgment, or further proceedings for such period of time as he may deem proper, and pending final disposition, may impose such terms and conditions within his jurisdiction as he may deem proper. Whenever the Judge obtains jurisdiction over a child under the age of eighteen years, that jurisdiction shall continue until the child reaches the age of twenty-one years, unless sooner discharged; provided that nothing herein shall affect the jurisdiction of other