

(c) The form of petitions and all other pleadings, and except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, the procedures to be followed by the court, shall be as specified in the Maryland Rules.

(d) The State's Attorney, upon assigning the reasons, may dismiss in open court a petition alleging delinquency.

(e) (1) The court shall conduct all hearings in an informal manner.

(2) IN ANY PROCEEDING IN WHICH A CHILD IS ALLEGED TO BE IN NEED OF SUPERVISION OR ASSISTANCE OR TO HAVE COMMITTED A DELINQUENT ACT THAT WOULD BE A MISDEMEANOR IF COMMITTED BY AN ADULT, THE COURT [It] UPON A FINDING OF GOOD CAUSE, THE COURT may exclude the general public from a hearing, and admit only those persons having a direct interest in the proceeding and their representatives.

(3) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (4) OF THIS SUBSECTION, IN A CASE IN WHICH A CHILD IS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED A DELINQUENT ACT THAT WOULD BE A FELONY IF COMMITTED BY AN ADULT, THE COURT SHALL CONDUCT IN OPEN COURT ANY HEARING OR OTHER PROCEEDING AT WHICH THE CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO APPEAR

(4) FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, THE COURT MAY EXCLUDE THE GENERAL PUBLIC FROM A HEARING OR OTHER PROCEEDING IN A CASE IN WHICH A CHILD IS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED A DELINQUENT ACT THAT WOULD BE A FELONY IF COMMITTED BY AN ADULT AND ADMIT ONLY THE VICTIM AND THOSE PERSONS HAVING A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE PROCEEDING AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

(5) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (6) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE COURT SHALL ANNOUNCE, IN OPEN COURT, ADJUDICATIONS AND DISPOSITIONS IN CASES WHERE A CHILD IS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED A DELINQUENT ACT WHICH WOULD BE A FELONY IF COMMITTED BY AN ADULT.

(6) FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, THE COURT MAY EXCLUDE THE GENERAL PUBLIC FROM A PROCEEDING AT WHICH AN ADJUDICATION OR DISPOSITION IS ANNOUNCED AND ADMIT ONLY THE VICTIM AND THOSE PERSONS HAVING A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE PROCEEDING AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

(f) The court shall try cases without a jury.

(g) Whenever a child in need of assistance petition is filed by the local department of social services, the local department shall be a party to the proceeding and shall present to the court the evidence in support of the petition.

(h) The court shall hear and rule on a petition seeking an order for emergency medical treatment on an expedited basis.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 1997.

Approved May 8, 1997.