

Practice Alert



Date: April 19, 2024

PA24-IA-05

Issued by: Safety and Prevention Unit

“Child Representatives”/Witness Participation in CANRB’s

The purpose of this Practice Alert is to make staff aware of the new role that Child Representatives will play in future CANRB (Child Abuse and Neglect Review Board) hearings. The alleged victim’s parent, guardian, or legal representative has historically been considered a “child representative” and have been given twenty minutes during the CANRB hearing to share any information they would like the board to be aware of.

Pursuant to 13CSR 35-31.025, “child representatives” are now considered witnesses. While the Children’s Division is required to notify “child representatives” of the scheduled hearing, only the Children’s Division and the alleged perpetrator are required to be given twenty minutes to present information to the board during their individual presentations. “Child representatives” who wish to provide evidence on behalf of the alleged victim may do so at the discretion of CANRB.

Otherwise, moving forward “child representatives” will no longer be permitted to present in CANRB hearings, without being called as a witness. Either the Children’s Division or the alleged perpetrator may request these individuals to present information as a witness during their individual presentations. Instead of being granted their own individual time to present at CANRB, “child representatives” will be able to submit a written statement and/or evidence to the board to review three weeks prior to the hearing.

Children’s Division may invite anyone with relevant information to participate during CD’s twenty-minute presentation. This not only includes the “child representatives” but may include law enforcement or the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) forensic interviewer. Calling witnesses can be extremely beneficial to the Children’s Division’s presentation at CANRB and staff are encouraged to utilize this option more frequently than is current practice.

Anyone called as a witness for either the Children’s Division or the alleged perpetrator will only be permitted in the hearing during their time to present.

Those “child representatives” that have already confirmed participation in their CANRB hearings through November 2024, will still be allowed to participate in the hearing and will be allotted their 20 minutes as previously expected.

“Child representatives” will continue to be notified of the hearing, any continuances, withdrawals, the outcome of the CANRB and any other correspondence necessary.

Camille Walker
CANRB Program Specialist