

Rule 45. Admission to Neglect Proceedings

(a) Limitation on admission to hearings. The general public shall be excluded from judicial hearings concerning children alleged to be neglected. Persons having a proper interest in a particular case or in the work of the Family Court may be admitted as provided by paragraphs (b) and (c) of this Rule. Persons admitted to hearings pursuant to this Rule shall not divulge information identifying the child, members of the child's family or any other party to the proceedings.

(b) Persons admitted without application. The following persons shall be deemed to have a proper interest in the work of the Family Court and need not apply for admission under paragraph (d) of this Rule in order to be admitted to Family Court hearings:

- (1) Any member of the Bar of the District of Columbia;
- (2) Authorized personnel of the Family Court;
- (3) Authorized personnel of the Division of Social Services; and

(4) Authorized representatives of the Child and Family Services Agency, including representatives of private agencies providing foster care case planning and supervision under contract with the Agency.

(c) Persons admitted by permission. Other persons having a proper interest in a particular case or in the work of the Family Court may be admitted upon approval of the presiding judge of the Family Court or his or her designee, provided that the judicial officer before whom the hearing is scheduled shall retain the discretion to exclude such persons from the hearing. The following persons shall be deemed to have a proper interest in the work of the Family Court, and shall be admitted to Family Court hearings after filling out an application pursuant to paragraph (d) of this Rule:

- (1) Any authorized representative of the news media;
- (2) Any attorney not a member of the Bar of the District of Columbia; and
- (3) Superior Court personnel other than those working in the Family Court.

Other persons may be admitted at the discretion of the judicial officer, upon completing an application for admission pursuant to paragraph (d) of this Rule,

(d) Application for admission. A person seeking permission to attend a hearing or series of hearings shall file an application, stating in writing his or her name, address and telephone number, business or professional affiliation and reasons for wishing to attend. The applicant shall also certify that he or she will not divulge information identifying the child, members of the child's family, or any other party to the proceeding. The applicant shall be informed of the criminal penalties that attach to the unauthorized use of the confidential information obtained as a result of attendance at a closed hearing. The application shall be completed in duplicate on a form supplied by the Family Court, and shall be personally signed by the applicant. When approved by the presiding judge or his or her designee, the original application shall be kept on file by the Family Court, and the copy shall be carried with the applicant at all times during attendance at hearings.

(e) Taking photographs and radio and television broadcasting.

(1) The taking of photographs, or radio or television broadcasting will not be permitted in any of the courtrooms of the Family Court during the progress of judicial proceedings, or in any of the anterooms adjacent thereto, in the detention rooms, in the lobby, or in the corridors of the courthouse occupied by the Family Court.

(2) Limited permission to take photographs. The taking of photographs in any office or other room of the Family Court shall be only with the knowledge and consent of the official or person in charge of such office and of the person or persons photographed.