

**National Center for State Courts**  
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| <b>State/Territory</b> | <b>Practice Related to Public Access to Proceedings</b>  | <b>Hearings to Which Public Has Access</b>                            | <b>Authority</b> | <b>Year Authorizing Public Access</b> | <b>Practice Related to Public Access to Court Files</b>  |
|------------------------|--|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Connecticut            | Presumably closed proceedings with judicial discretion to open proceedings   | Ajudicatory, dispositional, and review hearings                       | Statute          | 1969, with subsequent amendments      | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file   |
| Delaware               | Closed proceedings for all cases   | N/A   | Statute          | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| District of Columbia   | Closed proceedings for all cases   | N/A   | Statute          | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases; except certain individuals, specified by statute, may be permitted to have access to the records |
| Florida                | Dependency adjudicatory hearings are open to the public, unless the court specifically closes a particular hearing upon a finding that the public interest or welfare of the child are best served by the closure; termination of parental rights adjudicatory hearings are closed to the public | Ajudicatory (for dependency only), dispositional, and review hearings | Statute          | 1975                                  | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file   |
| Georgia                | Closed proceedings for all cases; the court may admit any person having a proper interest in the case or the work of the court to hearings   | N/A   | Statute          | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases; except as permitted by statute   |

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| Guam                   |   |   |  |                                       |   |
| Hawaii                 | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A   | Statute (records)<br><br>Court Rule (hearings) | N/A                                   | Case file presumably closed, judicial discretion to open all or part of file  |
| Idaho                  | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A   | Statute<br><br>Court Rule                      | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases  |
| Illinois               | Only persons specified in statute or who in the opinion of the court have a direct interest in the case or the work of the court shall be admitted to hearings; the general public, except for the news media and the victim, are excluded from all hearings; the court may prohibit any person present in the court from further disclosing the minor's identity | N/A   | Statute  | N/A                                   | Case files are closed, except as permitted by statute or special order of the court (statute allows news media to inspect juvenile court records) |
| Indiana                | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings (most courts routinely close abuse and neglect proceedings)   | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute  | 1979                                  | Case file presumably closed, judicial discretion to open all or part of file  |

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| Iowa                   | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings   | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute          | 1989                                  | Case file presumably closed, judicial discretion to open all or part of file   |
| Kansas                 | Any person may attend the proceeding upon agreement of all interested parties, unless the court finds the presence of the persons would be disruptive to the proceedings. | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute          | 1983                                  | Case file presumably closed, judicial discretion to open all or part of file   |
| Kentucky               | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A   | Statute          | N/A                                   | Case file closed, except to specific list of individuals. Court may grant access to others upon request and showing cause. |
| Louisiana              | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A   | Statute          | N/A                                   | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file   |
| Maine                  | Presumably closed proceedings with judicial discretion to open proceedings  | N/A   | Statute          | N/A                                   | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file   |

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| Maryland               | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings; abuse reports, however, are discussed in a confidential manner in the courtroom                            | (unspecified)                                    | Statute<br><br>Court Rule                                | 1998                                  | Case files are closed, except as permitted by statute   |
| Massachusetts          | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute  | N/A                                   | Case files are closed; exceptions may be made for research purposes or law enforcement purposes with the permission of the court  |
| Michigan               | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to closed  | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and review hearings | Court Rule   | 1988                                  | Case file presumably open with judicial discretion to seal all or part of file (access to records may be limited by local administrative order requiring specific identification of information for files being requested, such as case name or number) |
| Minnesota              | A three-year pilot project in 12 of 87 counties allows child protection hearings in the 12 counties to be presumed accessible to the public unless an exceptional circumstance exists | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and review hearings | Statute<br><br>Court Rule (authorizes the pilot project) | 1998                                  | In the 12 pilot counties, the public may have access to all child protection court files; except the court rules specifically identifies certain records that are not accessible  |

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| Mississippi            | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute                    | N/A                                   | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file |
| Missouri               | Presumably closed proceedings with judicial discretion to open proceedings                        | N/A  | Statute                    | N/A                                   | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file |
| Montana                | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute                    | N/A                                   | Case files are closed, except as permitted by statute                            |
| Nebraska               | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings                         | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and review hearings | Constitution<br>Court Rule | 1875                                  | Case file presumably open with judicial discretion to seal all or part of file   |
| Nevada                 | Closed proceedings, only persons having a direct interest as ordered by the judge may be admitted | N/A  | Statute                    | N/A                                   | Case files are closed; court may publicly disclose information, if necessary     |
| New Hampshire          | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute                    | N/A                                   | The court may authorize disclosure information.                                  |
| New Jersey             | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute<br>Court Rule      | N/A                                   | Case files closed for all cases  |

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| New Mexico             | Closed proceedings for all cases; the media is allowed to attend hearings, but not divulge the names of the child, parent, or guardian; other persons with a legitimate interest in the cases or the work of the court may attend hearings provided they receive court permission and refrain from divulging any information that would identify the child or family | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute               | N/A                                   | Case files closed, except as permitted by statute or by order of the court  |
| New York               | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings  | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute<br>Court Rule | 1909<br>1970                          | Files not open to “indiscriminate” public inspection, however, the court in its discretion may permit the inspection of any papers or records |
| North Carolina         | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings  | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute               | 1979,<br>amended<br>1998              | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file  |

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| North Dakota             | Closed proceedings except to declare a person in contempt of court; the court may admit others with proper interest in the case or in the work of the court | N/A   | Statute   | 1999                                  | Case files are closed, except as permitted by statute  |
| Northern Mariana Islands | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings   | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute   | (unspecified)                         | Case files closed in all cases   |
| Ohio                     | Cases are neither “presumptively open, nor presumptively closed, to press or public”.   | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Constitution<br>Statute<br>Court Rule<br>Case Law | 1851<br>1969<br>1972<br>1990          | As a general rule, no public use can be made of any juvenile court record, except if there is an appeal, or authorized by court order. |
| Oklahoma                 | Presumably closed proceedings with judicial discretion to open proceedings  | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and/or review hearings | Statute   | 1968                                  | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all of part of file   |

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|------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Oregon                 | Public access for all cases  | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and review hearings | State Constitution<br>Statute | 1859<br>1980                          | Case files are closed, except the public has access to the name and date of birth of a child, as well as the basis of the court's jurisdiction over the child. The public also has a right to know the date, time, and place of any court proceeding in which the child is involved. |
| Pennsylvania           | Closed proceedings for all cases   | N/A  | Statute                       | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| Puerto Rico            | Closed proceedings for all cases   | N/A  | Statute                       | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| Rhode Island           | Closed proceedings in all cases  | N/A  | Statute                       | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| South Carolina         | Closed proceedings in all cases  | N/A  | Statute                       | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| South Dakota           | Presumably closed proceedings with judicial discretion to open proceedings | N/A  | Statute<br>Case Law           | N/A                                   | Case files are closed, except as permitted by statute  |
| Tennessee              | Presumably closed proceedings with judicial discretion to open proceedings | N/A  | Statute<br>Court Rule         | N/A                                   | Case files presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file  |



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| Texas                  | Presumably open proceedings with judicial discretion to close proceedings   | Adjudicatory, dispositional, and review hearings | Statute<br>Case Law | 1995<br>1992                          | Case file presumably open with judicial discretion to seal all or part of file   |
| Utah                   | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute             | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| Vermont                | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute             | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| Virginia               | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute             | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| Virgin Islands         | Presumably closed except to declare a person in contempt of court; the court may admit others with proper interest in the case or in the work of the court on condition that such persons keep information they hear confidential | N/A  | Statute             | N/A                                   | Case files are closed, except as permitted by statute                            |
| Washington             | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute             | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases   |
| West Virginia          | Closed proceedings for all cases  | N/A  | Statute             | N/A                                   | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file |
| Wisconsin              | Presumably closed proceedings with judicial discretion to open proceedings  | (no response)                                    | Statute             | (no response)                         | Case file presumably closed with judicial discretion to open all or part of file |

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|------------------------|---|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Wyoming                | Closed proceedings for all cases                        | N/A  | Statute          | N/A                                   | Case files closed in all cases                          |