

38-2219. Evaluation of development or needs of child. (a) *Of the child.* (1) *Psychological or emotional.* During proceedings under this code, the court, on its own motion or the motion of the guardian ad litem for the child, a party or interested party, may order an evaluation and written report of the psychological or emotional development or needs of a child who is the subject of the proceedings. The court may refer the child to a state institution for the evaluation if the secretary advises the court that the facility is a suitable place to care for, treat or evaluate the child and that space is available. The expenses of transportation to and from the state facility may be paid as a part of the expenses of temporary care and custody. The child may be referred to a mental health center or qualified professional for evaluation and the expenses of the evaluation may be considered as expenses of the proceedings and assessed as provided in this code. If the court orders an evaluation as provided in this section, a parent of the child shall have the right to obtain an independent evaluation at the expense of the parent.

(2) *Medical.* During proceedings under this code, the court may order an examination and report of the medical condition and needs of a child who is the subject of the proceedings. The court may also order a report from any physician who has been attending the child stating the diagnosis, condition and treatment afforded the child.

(3) *Educational.* During proceedings under this code, the court may order the chief administrative officer of the school which the child attends or attended to provide to the court information that is readily available which the school officials believe would properly indicate the educational needs of the child. The order may direct that the school conduct an educational needs assessment of the child and send a report of the assessment to the court. The educational needs assessment may include a meeting involving any of the following: The child's parents; the child's teachers; the school psychologist; a school special services representative; a representative of the secretary; the child's court-appointed special advocate; the child's foster parents, legal guardian and permanent custodian; a court services officer; and other persons that the chief administrative officer of the school or the officer's designee considers appropriate.

(b) *Physical, psychological or emotional status of parent or custodian.* During proceedings under this code, the court may order: (1) An examination, evaluation and report of the physical, mental or emotional status or needs of a parent, a person residing with a parent or any person being considered as one to whom the court may grant custody; and

(2) written reports from any qualified person concerning the parenting skills or ability to provide for the physical, mental or emotional needs and future development of a child by a parent or any person being considered as one to whom the court may grant custody.

(c) *Confidentiality of reports.* (1) *Reports of court ordered examination or evaluation.* No confidential relationship of physician and patient, psychologist and client or social worker and client shall arise from an examination or evaluation ordered by the court.

(2) *Report from private physician, psychologist or therapist.* When any interested party or party to proceedings under this code wishes the court to have the benefit of information or opinion from a physician, psychologist, registered marriage and family therapist or social worker with whom there is a confidential relationship, the party or interested party may waive the confidential relationship but restrict the information to be furnished or testimony to be given to those matters material to the issues before the court. If requested, the court may make an in camera examination of the proposed witness or the file of the proposed witness and excise any matters that are not material to the issues before the court.

(d) *Reports prepared by a court-appointed special advocate or by the secretary.* All reports prepared by a court-appointed special advocate or by the secretary shall be filed with the court and shall be made available as provided in subsection (e).

(e) *Availability of reports.* (1) All reports provided for in this section shall be filed with the court and shall be made available to counsel for any party or interested party prior to any scheduled hearing on any matter addressed by the report. If any party or interested party is not represented by counsel, the report shall be made available to that party.

(2) All reports provided for in this section may be read by the court at any stage of a proceeding under this code, but no fact or conclusion derived from a report shall be used as the basis for an order of the court unless the information has been admitted into evidence following an opportunity for any party or interested party to examine, under oath, the person who prepared the report. If the court is in possession of a report that has not been offered into evidence, the court shall inquire whether there is an objection to admitting the report into evidence. If there is no objection, the court may admit the report into evidence.

History: L. 2006, ch. 200, § 14; L. 2007, ch. 57, § 2; Apr. 5.