



## Allow Adults to Whom a Child Has Disclosed Abuse to Testify in Court And Keep Kids Safer from Abuse

When adults are held accountable in the court system, kids are safer from abuse. If a child has been a victim of abuse, trauma and fear may affect their ability to testify in court. Their fear or inability should not prevent a judge from hearing accurate information about a child's experience, which is crucial in determining a verdict in child abuse cases. If a child has disclosed information about abuse to an adult, that adult could testify about that disclosure.

### **Ensure courts have more complete information about alleged child abuse to keep kids safe:**

#### **Children are more likely to describe abuse to adults they trust**

While a child may be comfortable disclosing to a teacher or other trusted adult, recalling the abuse throughout the court process could bring back fear or trauma that clouds their testimony. Allowing an adult to whom the child has previously disclosed abuse to testify presents a more complete account of the child's experience to the court.

#### **Trustworthy adults who testify can help courts better understand the incidents of abuse**

Before trial, a judge would ensure the adult's testimony is trustworthy based on the statement and circumstances around the child's disclosure of that statement, and there must be corroborating evidence that the abuse took place. This helps ensure that statements made on court record accurately represent the child's experience.

### **Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:**

Keep kids safer from abuse by allowing adults to whom a child has disclosed abuse to testify in court about that disclosure.



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