

421.350 Testimony of child allegedly victim of illegal sexual activity.

- (1) This section applies only to a proceeding in the prosecution of an offense, including but not limited to an offense under KRS 510.040 to 510.155, 529.030 to 529.050, 529.070, 530.020, 530.060, 530.064(1)(a), 531.310, 531.320, 531.370, or any specified in KRS 439.3401 and all dependency proceedings pursuant to KRS Chapter 620, when the act is alleged to have been committed against a child twelve (12) years of age or younger, and applies to the statements or testimony of that child or another child who is twelve (12) years of age or younger who witnesses one of the offenses included in this subsection.
- (2) The court may, on the motion of the attorney for any party and upon a finding of compelling need, order that the testimony of the child be taken in a room other than the courtroom and be televised by closed circuit equipment in the courtroom to be viewed by the court and the finder of fact in the proceeding. Only the attorneys for the defendant and for the state, persons necessary to operate the equipment, and any person whose presence the court finds would contribute to the welfare and well-being of the child may be present in the room with the child during his testimony. Only the attorneys may question the child. The persons operating the equipment shall be confined to an adjacent room or behind a screen or mirror that permits them to see and hear the child during his testimony, but does not permit the child to see or hear them. The court shall permit the defendant to observe and hear the testimony of the child in person, but shall ensure that the child cannot hear or see the defendant.
- (3) The court may, on the motion of the attorney for any party and upon a finding of compelling need, order that the testimony of the child be taken outside the courtroom and be recorded for showing in the courtroom before the court and the finder of fact in the proceeding. Only those persons permitted to be present at the taking of testimony under subsection (3) of this section may be present during the taking of the child's testimony, and the persons operating the equipment shall be confined from the child's sight and hearing as provided by subsection (3) of this section. The court shall permit the defendant to observe and hear the testimony of the child in person, but shall ensure that the child cannot hear or see the defendant. The court shall also ensure that:
 - (a) The recording is both visual and oral and is recorded on film or videotape or by other electronic means;
 - (b) The recording equipment was capable of making an accurate recording, the operator was competent, and the recording is accurate and is not altered;
 - (c) Each voice on the recording is identified; and
 - (d) Each party is afforded an opportunity to view the recording before it is shown in the courtroom.
- (4) If the court orders the testimony of a child to be taken under subsection (2) or (3) of this section, the child may not be required to testify in court at the proceeding for which the testimony was taken, but shall be subject to being recalled during the course of the trial to give additional testimony under the same circumstances as with any other recalled witness, provided that the additional testimony is given utilizing

the provisions of subsection (2) or (3) of this section.

- (5) For the purpose of subsections (2) and (3) of this section, "compelling need" is defined as the substantial probability that the child would be unable to reasonably communicate because of serious emotional distress produced by the defendant's presence.

Effective: July 15, 2008

History: Amended 2008 Ky. Acts ch. 58, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2008. -- Amended 2007 Ky. Acts ch. 19, sec. 10, effective June 26, 2007. -- Amended 2006 Ky. Acts ch. 182, sec. 63, effective July 12, 2006. -- Amended 1996 Ky. Acts ch. 178, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1996. -- Amended 1986 Ky. Acts ch. 439, sec. 2, effective July 15, 1986. -- Created 1984 Ky. Acts ch. 382, sec. 19, effective July 13, 1984.