

**SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
JUVENILE COURT PROCEDURAL RULES COMMITTEE**

ADOPTION REPORT

Amendment of Pa.R.J.C.P. 515, 600, 610, 612, 620, and 800

On July 20, 2026, the Supreme Court amended Pennsylvania Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure 515, 600, 610, 612, 620, and 800 to implement the Act of October 16, 2024, P.L. 1003, No. 107 (Act 107), which amended 42 Pa.C.S. § 6353 to require a “dispositional review” of a juvenile’s out-of-home placement at least every three months and for the court to make specific findings and to explain its reasoning for each finding. The Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee has prepared this Adoption Report describing the rulemaking process. An Adoption Report should not be confused with Comments to the rules. See Pa.R.J.A. 103, cmt. The statements contained herein are those of the Committee, not the Court.

Prior to the amendment of 42 Pa.C.S. § 6353, the Juvenile Act required the court to review a juvenile’s out-of-home placement, *i.e.*, commitment, every six months and to hold a dispositional review hearing at least every nine months. That statutory requirement was suspended insofar as it was inconsistent with Pa.R.J.C.P. 610, which required dispositional and commitment review hearings to be held at least every six months regardless of whether the juvenile was in an out-of-home placement. See Pa.R.J.C.P. 800(18). Thus, a juvenile’s disposition, if the juvenile was not in an out-of-home placement, would be reviewed at least every six months. Similarly, a juvenile’s disposition, if the juvenile was in an out-of-home placement, would also be reviewed every six months. For a juvenile in an out-of-home placement, the disposition review was called a “commitment review.” As the timing and nature of the review were similar, the terminology seemed to be a distinction without a difference under the rule.

The Committee published for comment a proposed amendment of Pa.R.J.C.P. 610. See 54 Pa.B. 7826 (December 7, 2024). The Committee proposed removing “and Commitment” from the rule’s title to indicate that both types of review are “dispositional” but with different timing and required findings. Current subdivision (A) would be replaced with subdivisions (a) and (b). Subdivision (a) would require a dispositional review hearing at least every six months if a juvenile is not committed to an out-of-home placement. The timing of this review retained the current six-month minimum. The required findings for that review were carried over from current subdivision (A). Subdivision (b) was intended to reflect the specific requirements of Act 107, including the minimum three-month review and the findings necessary for a juvenile committed to an out-of-home placement.

Current subdivision (A)(2) concerning the juvenile’s required in-person appearance at least once a year would be consolidated with proposed subdivision (d)

concerning the use of advanced communication technology (ACT). Current subdivision (A)(3), permitting the court to schedule a review at any time, would be merged into proposed subdivisions (a)(1) and (b)(1).

A commenter suggested that juveniles in out-of-home placements be required to appear in person twice a year. *Cf.* Pa.R.J.C.P. 129(A) (Appearance by Advance Communication Technology). The Committee believes that an increase in the frequency of in-person court appearances is a matter best left to the discretion of the juvenile court and assessed on an individualized basis.

The commenter also suggested that subdivision (d) require that the ACT allow a juvenile to participate via two-way, simultaneous audio-visual communication and allow the juvenile to consult with counsel. The Committee observes that ACT is defined by Pa.R.J.C.P. 120 and does not require simultaneous audio-visual communication. For example, a telephone is acceptable. Additionally, Pa.R.J.C.P. 129(B)(2) already requires that a juvenile be permitted to communicate confidentially with counsel when ACT is used.

Post-publication, subdivision (d) was revised to distinguish between the 12-month in-court appearance requirement and the juvenile's other appearances. For the 12-month requirement, "once a year" was changed to "every 12 months from the date of disposition" to avoid any confusion that the requirement was once a calendar year. The good cause provision for using ACT in lieu of being physically present in court was removed from the annual appearance requirement. For a juvenile's other appearances and for the appearance of witnesses, ACT may be used, as is currently permitted. The Comment was also revised to emphasize that audio-visual communications are preferred but that audio-only communications are permitted.

Additionally, portions of Pa.R.J.C.P. 515, 600, 612, and 620 were included to reflect the amendment of Pa.R.J.C.P. 610. Finally, Pa.R.J.C.P. 800 was included to remove the prior suspension of 42 Pa.C.S. § 6353(a).

Aside from stylistic revisions, the following commentary has been removed:

Pa.R.J.C.P. 600

Official Note: Rule 600 adopted April 1, 2005, effective October 1, 2005. Amended April 29, 2011, effective July 1, 2011. Amended May 26, 2011, effective July 1, 2011.

Committee Explanatory Reports: Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 600 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 2413 (May 14, 2011). Final Report explaining the provisions of Rule 600 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 3180 (June 25, 2011).

Pa.R.J.C.P. 610

Under paragraph (A), the court is to conduct dispositional review hearings as frequently as necessary to ensure that the juvenile is receiving necessary treatment and services and that the terms and conditions of the disposition are being met. See Rule 800.

Some placement facilities are hours away from the dispositional court. Paragraph (C) allows a hearing to be conducted via teleconferencing, two-way simultaneous audio-visual communication, or similar method.

Official Note: Rule 610 adopted April 1, 2005, effective October 1, 2005. Amended December 30, 2005, effective immediately. Amended April 21, 2011, effective July 1, 2011. Amended April 29, 2011, effective July 1, 2011. Amended May 26, 2011, effective July 1, 2011. Amended June 28, 2013, effective immediately. Amended May 11, 2017, effective October 1, 2017. Amended October 22, 2021, effective April 1, 2022.

Committee Explanatory Reports: Final Report explaining the provisions of Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 35 Pa.B. 2214 (April 16, 2005). Final Report explaining the revisions of Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 36 Pa.B. 186 (January 14, 2006). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 2319 (May 7, 2011). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 2413 (May 14, 2011). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 3180 (June 25, 2011). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 43 Pa.B. 3938 (July 13, 2013). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 47 Pa.B. 2969 (May 27, 2017). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 610 published with the Court's Order at 51 Pa.B. 6905 (November 6, 2021).

Pa.R.J.C.P. 800

Official Note: Rule 800 adopted April 1, 2005, effective October 1, 2005. Amended December 30, 2005, effective immediately. Amended March 23, 2007, effective August 1, 2007. Amended February 26, 2008, effective June 1, 2008. Amended March 19, 2009, effective June 1, 2009. Amended February 12, 2010, effective immediately. Amended April 21, 2011, effective

July 1, 2011. Amended July 18, 2012, effective October 1, 2012. Amended April 6, 2017, effective September 1, 2017.

Committee Explanatory Reports: Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 36 Pa.B. 186 (January 14, 2006). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 37 Pa.B. 1483 (April 7, 2007). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 38 Pa.B. 1142 (March 8, 2008). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 39 Pa.B. 1614 (April 4, 2009). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 40 Pa.B. 1073 (February 27, 2010). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 41 Pa.B. 2319 (May 7, 2011). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 42 Pa.B. 4909 (August 4, 2012). Final Report explaining the amendments to Rule 800 published with the Court's Order at 47 Pa.B. 2313 (April 22, 2017).

The amendments become effective January 1, 2027.