

RCW 26.44.053 Guardian ad litem, appointment—Examination of person having legal custody—Hearing—Procedure. (1) In any judicial proceeding under this chapter or chapter 13.34 RCW in which it is alleged that a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect, the court shall appoint a guardian ad litem for the child as provided in chapter 13.34 RCW. The requirement of a guardian ad litem may be deemed satisfied if the child is represented by counsel in the proceedings.

(2) At any time prior to or during a hearing in such a case, the court may, on its own motion, or the motion of the guardian ad litem, or other parties, order the examination by a physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist, of any parent or child or other person having custody of the child at the time of the alleged child abuse or neglect, if the court finds such an examination is necessary to the proper determination of the case. The hearing may be continued pending the completion of such examination. The physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist conducting such an examination may be required to testify concerning the results of such examination and may be asked to give his or her opinion as to whether the protection of the child requires that he or she not be returned to the custody of his or her parents or other persons having custody of him or her at the time of the alleged child abuse or neglect. Persons so testifying shall be subject to cross-examination as are other witnesses. No information given at any such examination of the parent or any other person having custody of the child may be used against such person in any subsequent criminal proceedings against such person or custodian concerning the alleged abuse or neglect of the child.

(3) A parent or other person having legal custody of a child alleged to be abused or neglected shall be a party to any proceeding that may impair or impede such person's interest in and custody or control of the child. [1997 c 386 s 28; 1996 c 249 s 16; 1994 c 110 s 1; 1993 c 241 s 4. Prior: 1987 c 524 s 11; 1987 c 206 s 7; 1975 1st ex.s. c 217 s 8.]

Application—Effective date—1997 c 386: See notes following RCW 13.50.010.

Intent—1996 c 249: See note following RCW 2.56.030.

Conflict with federal requirements—1993 c 241: See note following RCW 13.34.030.