

# CRB Reviews:

## What to Expect



### What is the CRB?

The CRB (Citizen Review Board) is a court program that is required by law to review foster care cases. The CRB is **not** a part of ODHS (Oregon Department of Human Services) Child Welfare. Instead, the CRB helps to ensure that ODHS is making reasonable efforts in your case.

### Who are the CRB board members?

CRB reviews are led by a team of volunteers from your county. Our volunteers come from backgrounds related to law, psychology, child development, education, medicine, addiction recovery, and more. Many volunteers have personal experience related to foster care. All volunteers undergo extensive ongoing training.

The CRB brings transparency and public oversight to foster care cases and provides a place for parents and children to be heard. CRB volunteers care first and foremost about the well-being of children and parents in the child welfare system. They recognize the hard job that parents face and the uniqueness of every person's situation and history. They also value the contributions of ODHS workers, CASAs, judges, attorneys, teachers, therapists, healthcare workers, resource parents, and others in the child welfare system. Most importantly, they believe that every child deserves to be safe. Although CRB volunteers are responsible for asking sometimes difficult questions, delving into details of your case, and making decisions that not everyone will agree with, these values are the reason and inspiration behind everything they do.

### Who will be at the CRB review?

Because attendance at CRB reviews is not mandatory for anyone but ODHS, and there is no RSVP required, no one knows exactly who will attend your review. However, there are usually between 5-10 people at CRB reviews (depending on how many people are involved in the case). CRB reviews are not open to the public and cannot be recorded.

The CRB invites legal parties and resource parents to CRB reviews. Legal parties are parents and their attorneys, children and their attorneys, ODHS (your caseworker), CASA, and the Tribe (if applicable). ODHS may also request that CRB invite other people involved in your case such as grandparents, mentors, service providers, etc. The CRB does not send notices to children younger than 14 years old but sends them to their parents, attorney, resource parents and CASA instead.

You may bring a support person to the CRB review with you. Note: If a legal party to your case objects to the presence of your support person, the board may ask them to wait outside the review, however such situations are rare.

### What will happen at the CRB review?

The CRB's role is to collect information, provide oversight through their findings and recommendations, give

an opportunity for you to be heard, and shed light on important issues in your case. CRB reviews are not planning meetings, and they are not court hearings. The board has **no authority** to change your child's permanency plan or return your child(ren) to you. Instead, the board will go over some legal information, ask questions of the parties at the review, and make recommendations based on that information.

After the review, **ODHS** is expected to implement the board's recommendations unless they notify the CRB in writing within 17 days of receiving the report that they do not intend to implement one or more of the recommendations. The **judge** uses the information contained in the report to make further decisions about your case.

### **Structure of a CRB Review**

At every review, the CRB starts by reading an opening statement that includes the ground rules for the day. Next, the board goes over basic information of the case (such as the basis of jurisdiction, child names and ages, etc.). There are 10 questions that the law requires the board to answer in each CRB review. Please see the guide on the back of your notice letter (or click [here](#)) to read these 10 questions, which are called "findings." The board answers these questions by reading documents provided to them before the review and asking questions at the review. The board members will ask you some questions. If you do not wish to answer, you are not required to do so, or you may ask your attorney to answer for you. You might not be asked for your input on every topic due to time constraints, but the CRB volunteers will give you a chance to speak at least once (and possibly many times) during the review. At the end, the board reads a closing statement.

CRB reviews are not open discussion time. Instead, the reviews are held in a "question and answer" style, where a CRB volunteer asks people questions, and those people answer with any information they would like to provide. There is almost always a time when the CRB volunteer asks if anyone else has anything to add. That is a good time to speak up if there is an important issue that you feel has not yet been addressed.

### **Disruptive Participants**

We understand that it is sometimes difficult to remain calm when such big, important issues are discussed. Because we value creating a space for safe communication, if anyone at a CRB review cannot follow the CRB volunteers' instructions, becomes abusive, or continually interrupts the review, they may lose their ability to contribute further information. If that happens, the CRB field manager may mute their line so they can continue to participate by listening, or may excuse them from the review.

### **After the Review**

The information that is collected at the review is included in a document, called a "Findings and Recommendations" report, which is mailed to you, your attorney, all legal parties, the judge, and sometimes resource parents who attend the review. The judge uses this information in your upcoming court hearings, and ODHS carries out recommendations that the board makes (unless they respond in writing within 17 days that they do not intend to do so). If you need to update your mailing address, please tell the CRB field manager.

### **More Information**

For more information on what to expect, please speak to your attorney or caseworker, or contact your local CRB field manager. The field manager's contact information is included on the mailed legal notice you received for your review.

**We are so grateful for your participation and look forward to meeting you soon.**