



Muskingum County Prosecutor's Office

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Dresden man sentenced to decade in prison for molesting young child

The Muskingum County Prosecutor's Office successfully argued that a 60-year-old Dresden man be sentenced to a maximum 10 years in prison for molesting a young child.

Jurors convicted Michael Larr as charged on two third-degree felony counts of gross sexual imposition last month.

His victim, who was under the age of five at the time of the abuse, informed her mother that Larr would sometimes tickle her between her legs. During an interview with a trained professional in the field of child sexual abuse, the victim again described how Larr tickled her vagina over her clothing.

In preparation for sentencing, Larr spoke with his pre-sentence investigator and explained that he did tickle the girl on her "most tickly spot," the upper, inner-thigh. Still, Larr argued for probation at sentencing by explaining how he did not molest the child.

During the course of his statement, Larr blamed the victim's mother, and poverty and the courts for his situation while failing to accept any responsibility for his actions. Larr claimed that a child that age wouldn't readily identify abuse unless he or she was "coached."

The defendant went on at length to describe how he tickled the victim, as well as the times when he was naked in the presence of the victim. He claimed that no other children had accused him of abuse, therefore he must not have abused his victim.

Jurors saw the case differently than Larr, convicting him after learning from medical and forensic professionals about early childhood development and how a child's age and experience, including the experience of being sexually abused, affects disclosure of the abuse. They viewed the recording the child's forensic interview describing her abuse and concluded that she was indeed abused.

Larr's argument was unconvincing to Fleagle, who, after identifying Larr's extensive criminal record and the victim's traumatization, sentenced Larr to the maximum, consecutive sentence of 10 years in prison. Larr will have to serve 5 years of post-release control, commonly referred to as parole, after his sentence and will have to register every 90 days for the rest of his life.

"The victim's family has been concerned with statements the Defendant has made about taking the victim once he's out and leaving with her," Assistant Prosecutor Gerald Anderson, who handled the case, said. "He's failed to show any remorse and instead blamed the family for keeping him from the victim. This sentence will provide the victim with time to grow up safe from him."

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