

Hearing set on competence of George Edenfield, accused in Barrios slaying

His mental competency is at issue.

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CHRIS VIOLA/The Times-Union
George Edenfield

By [Teresa Stepzinski](#)

BRUNSWICK - A judge wants to know whether psychologists have determined if a convicted child molester is mentally competent to stand trial in the [sexual abuse slaying of Christopher Barrios Jr.](#)

Superior Court Judge Stephen Scarlett has ordered a hearing Aug. 3 for George Edenfield, who faces the death penalty if convicted of killing the 6-year-old Brunswick boy in 2007.

In January, Scarlett ordered George Edenfield to be evaluated by psychologists to determine his mental capacity and competency.

By law, Edenfield can't stand trial unless he is mentally competent and therefore capable of assisting in his defense.

Scarlett expects to receive the [evaluation results](#) along with recommendations at the upcoming hearing, according to his order filed late Tuesday.

Prosecutors assert Edenfield, 34, is competent and knows right from wrong although they have conceded he has a diminished mental capacity. His lawyers, however, assert he is both incompetent and mentally retarded.

Christopher had been playing outside at Canal Mobile Home Park on March 8, 2007, when he disappeared. Police recovered his body one week later wrapped in black plastic trash bags and dumped in woods about two miles from the park.

Edenfield and his parents, David and Peggy, were neighbors of the kindergartner. All three Edenfields were charged with the killing. A jury last year imposed the death penalty on his father, David Edenfield, after [finding him guilty](#) of murdering and molesting Christopher.

David Edenfield, 61, [is appealing](#). Lawyers for the elder Edenfield asked Scarlett to grant him a new trial. Scarlett has not ruled on the motion, which says David Edenfield didn't get a fair trial.

No trial date has been set for Peggy Edenfield.

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