

Excerpts of Selected Statutes

§ 7B-401.1. Parties.

- (b) Parents. - The juvenile's parent shall be a party unless one of the following applies:
- (1) The parent's rights have been terminated.
 - (2) The parent has relinquished the juvenile for adoption, unless the court orders that the parent be made a party.
 - (3) The parent has been convicted under G.S. 14-27.2 or G.S. 14-27.3 for an offense that resulted in the conception of the juvenile.

§ 7B-101. Definitions.

(18b) Return home or reunification. - Placement of the juvenile in the home of either parent or placement of the juvenile in the home of a guardian or custodian from whose home the child was removed by court order.

§ 7B-800.1. Pre-adjudication hearing.

- (a) Prior to the adjudicatory hearing, the court shall consider the following:
- (2) Identification of the parties to the proceeding.
 - (3) Whether paternity has been established or efforts made to establish paternity, including the identity and location of any missing parent.
 - (4) Whether relatives have been identified and notified as potential resources for placement or support.

§ 7B-901. Dispositional hearing.

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At the dispositional hearing, the court shall inquire as to the identity and location of any missing parent and whether paternity is at issue. The court shall include findings of the efforts undertaken to locate the missing parent and to serve that parent and efforts undertaken to establish paternity when paternity is an issue. The order may provide for specific efforts in determining the identity and location of any missing parent and specific efforts in establishing paternity. The court shall also inquire about efforts made to identify and notify relatives as potential resources for placement or support

§ 7B-506. Hearing to determine need for continued nonsecure custody.

- (h) At each hearing to determine the need for continued custody, the court shall determine the following:
- (1) Inquire as to the identity and location of any missing parent and whether paternity is at issue. The court shall include findings as to the efforts undertaken to locate the missing parent and to serve that parent, as well as efforts undertaken to establish paternity when paternity is an issue. The order may provide for specific efforts aimed at determining the identity and location of any missing parent, as well as specific efforts aimed at establishing paternity.
 - (2) Inquire about efforts made to identify and notify relatives as potential resources for placement or support and as to whether a relative of the juvenile

is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision of the juvenile in a safe home. If the court finds that the relative is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision in a safe home, then the court shall order temporary placement of the juvenile with the relative unless the court finds that placement with the relative would be contrary to the best interests of the juvenile. In placing a juvenile in nonsecure custody under this section, the court shall consider the Indian Child Welfare Act, Pub. L. No. 95-608, 25 U.S.C. §§ 1901, et seq., as amended, and the Howard M. Metzenbaum Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-382, 108 Stat. 4056, as amended, as they may apply. Placement of a juvenile with a relative outside of this State must be in accordance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children set forth in Article 38 of this Chapter.

§ 7B-505. Placement while in nonsecure custody.

(a) A juvenile meeting the criteria set out in G.S. 7B-503 may be placed in nonsecure custody with the department of social services or a person designated in the order for temporary residential placement in:

- (1) A licensed foster home or a home otherwise authorized by law to provide such care; or
- (2) A facility operated by the department of social services; or
- (3) Any other home or facility, including a relative's home approved by the court and designated in the order.

(b) In placing a juvenile in nonsecure custody under this section, the court shall first consider whether a relative of the juvenile is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision of the juvenile in a safe home. If the court finds that the relative is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision in a safe home, then the court shall order placement of the juvenile with the relative unless the court finds that placement with the relative would be contrary to the best interests of the juvenile.

§ 7B-903. Dispositional alternatives for abused, neglected, or dependent juvenile.

(a) The following alternatives for disposition shall be available to any court exercising jurisdiction, and the court may combine any of the applicable alternatives when the court finds the disposition to be in the best interests of the juvenile:

- (1) The court may dismiss the case or continue the case in order to allow the parent, guardian, custodian, caretaker or others to take appropriate action.
- (2) In the case of any juvenile who needs more adequate care or supervision or who needs placement, the court may:
 - a. Require that the juvenile be supervised in the juvenile's own home by the department of social services in the juvenile's county, or by other personnel as may be available to the court, subject to conditions applicable to the parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker as the court may specify; or
 - b. Place the juvenile in the custody of a parent, relative, private agency offering placement services, or some other suitable person; or

TPR § 7B-1105. Preliminary hearing; unknown parent.

(a) If either the name or identity of any parent whose parental rights the petitioner seeks to terminate is not known to the petitioner, the court shall, within 10 days from the date of filing of the petition, or during the next term of court in the county where the petition is filed if there is no court in the county in that 10-day period, conduct a preliminary hearing to ascertain the name or identity of such parent.

(b) The court may, in its discretion, inquire of any known parent of the juvenile concerning the identity of the unknown parent and may order the petitioner to conduct a diligent search for the parent. Should the court ascertain the name or identity of the parent, it shall enter a finding to that effect; and the parent shall be summoned to appear in accordance with G.S. 7B-1106.

(c) Notice of the preliminary hearing need be given only to the petitioner who shall appear at the hearing, but the court may cause summons to be issued to any person directing the person to appear and testify.

(d) If the court is unable to ascertain the name or identity of the unknown parent, the court shall order publication of notice of the termination proceeding and shall specifically order the place or places of publication and the contents of the notice which the court concludes is most likely to identify the juvenile to such unknown parent. The notice shall be published in a newspaper qualified for legal advertising in accordance with G.S. 1-597 and G.S. 1-598 and published in the counties directed by the court, once a week for three successive weeks. Provided, further, the notice shall:

- (1) Designate the court in which the petition is pending;
- (2) Be directed to "the father (mother) (father and mother) of a male (female) juvenile born on or about _____ in
(date)

County, _____,
(city)

_____, respondent";
(State)

- (3) Designate the docket number and title of the case (the court may direct the actual name of the title be eliminated and the words "In Re Doe" substituted therefor);
- (4) State that a petition seeking to terminate the parental rights of the respondent has been filed;
- (5) Direct the respondent to answer the petition within 30 days after a date stated in the notice, exclusive of such date, which date so stated shall be the date of first publication of notice and be substantially in the form as set forth in G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4(j1); and
- (6) State that the respondent's parental rights to the juvenile will be terminated upon failure to answer the petition within the time prescribed.

Upon completion of the service, an affidavit of the publisher shall be filed with the court.

(e) The court shall issue the order required by subsections (b) and (d) of this section within 30 days from the date of the preliminary hearing unless the court shall determine that additional time for investigation is required.

(f) Upon the failure of the parent served by publication pursuant to subsection (d) of this section to answer the petition within the time prescribed, the court shall issue an order terminating all parental rights of the unknown parent.

Adoption § 48-2-401. Notice by petitioner.

(a) No later than 30 days after a petition for adoption is filed pursuant to Part 3 of this Article, the petitioner shall initiate service of notice of the filing on the persons required to receive notice under subsections (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

(b) In all adoptions, the petitioner shall serve notice of the filing on each of the following:

- (1) Any individual whose consent to the adoption is required but has not been obtained, has been revoked in accord with this Chapter, or has become void as provided in this Chapter.
- (2) The spouse of the petitioner if that spouse is required to join in the petition and petitioner is requesting that the joinder requirement be waived, provided the court for cause may waive this notice requirement.
- (3) Any individual who has executed a consent or relinquishment, but who the petitioner has actually been informed has filed an action to set it aside for fraud or duress.
- (4) Any other person designated by the court who can provide information relevant to the proposed adoption.

(c) In the adoption of a minor, the petitioner shall also serve notice of the filing on each of the following:

- (1) A minor whose consent is dispensed with under G.S. 48-3-603(b)(2).
- (2) Any agency that placed the adoptee.
- (3) A man who to the actual knowledge of the petitioner claims to be or is named as the biological or possible biological father of the minor, and any biological or possible biological fathers who are unknown or whose whereabouts are unknown, but notice need not be served upon a man who has executed a consent, a relinquishment, or a notarized statement denying paternity or disclaiming any interest in the minor, a man whose parental rights have been legally terminated or who has been judicially determined not to be the minor's parent, a man whose consent to the adoption is not required under G.S. 48-3-603(a)(9) due to his conviction of a specified crime, or, provided the petition is filed within three months of the birth of the minor, a man whose consent to the adoption has been determined not to be required under G.S. 48-2-206.
- (4) Any individual who the petitioner has been actually informed has legal or physical custody of the minor or who has a right of visitation or communication with the minor under an existing court order issued by a court in this State or another state.

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§ 48-2-404. Notice of proceedings by court to alleged father.

If, at any time in the proceeding, it appears to the court that there is an alleged father of a minor adoptee as described in G.S. 48-2-401(c)(3) who has not been given notice, the court shall require notice of the proceeding to be given to him pursuant to G.S. 48-2-402.

§ 48-3-601. Persons whose consent to adoption is required.

Unless consent is not required under G.S. 48-3-603, a petition to adopt a minor may be granted only if consent to the adoption has been executed by:

- (1) The minor to be adopted if 12 or more years of age;
- (2) In a direct placement, by:
 - a. The mother of the minor;
 - b. Any man who may or may not be the biological father of the minor but who:
 1. Is or was married to the mother of the minor if the minor was born during the marriage or within 280 days after the marriage is terminated or the parties have separated pursuant to a written separation agreement or an order of separation entered under Chapters 50 or 50B of the General Statutes or a similar order of separation entered by a court in another jurisdiction;
 2. Attempted to marry the mother of the minor before the minor's birth, by a marriage solemnized in apparent compliance with law, although the attempted marriage is or could be declared invalid, and the minor is born during the attempted marriage, or within 280 days after the attempted marriage is terminated by annulment, declaration of invalidity, divorce, or, in the absence of a judicial proceeding, by the cessation of cohabitation;
 3. Before the filing of the petition, has legitimated the minor under the law of any state;
 4. Before the earlier of the filing of the petition or the date of a hearing under G.S. 48-2-206, has acknowledged his paternity of the minor and
 - I. Is obligated to support the minor under written agreement or by court order;
 - II. Has provided, in accordance with his financial means, reasonable and consistent payments for the support of the biological mother during or after the term of pregnancy, or the support of the minor, or both, which may include the payment of medical expenses, living expenses, or other tangible means of support, and has regularly visited or communicated, or attempted to visit or communicate with the biological mother during or after the term of pregnancy, or with the minor, or with both; or
 - III. After the minor's birth but before the minor's placement for adoption or the mother's relinquishment, has married or attempted to marry the mother of the minor by a marriage solemnized in apparent compliance with law, although the attempted marriage is or could be declared invalid; or

5. Before the filing of the petition, has received the minor into his home and openly held out the minor as his biological child; or
 6. Is the adoptive father of the minor; and
 - c. A guardian of the minor; and
- (3) In an agency placement by:
- a. The agency that placed the minor for adoption; and
 - b. Each individual described in subdivision (2) of this section who has not relinquished the minor pursuant to Part 7 of Article 3 of this Chapter.

§ 48-3-603. Persons whose consent is not required.

(a) Consent to an adoption of a minor is not required of a person or entity whose consent is not required under G.S. 48-3-601, or any of the following:

- (1) An individual whose parental rights and duties have been terminated under Article 11 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes or by a court of competent jurisdiction in another state.
 - (2) A man described in G.S. 48-3-601(2), other than an adoptive father, if (i) the man has been judicially determined not to be the father of the minor to be adopted, or (ii) another man has been judicially determined to be the father of the minor to be adopted.
 - (3) Repealed by Session Laws 1997-215, s. 11(a).
 - (4) An individual who has relinquished parental rights or guardianship powers, including the right to consent to adoption, to an agency pursuant to Part 7 of this Article.
 - (5) A man who is not married to the minor's birth mother and who, after the conception of the minor, has executed a notarized statement denying paternity or disclaiming any interest in the minor.
 - (6) A deceased parent or the personal representative of a deceased parent's estate.
 - (7) An individual listed in G.S. 48-3-601 who has not executed a consent or a relinquishment and who fails to respond to a notice of the adoption proceeding within 30 days after the service of the notice.
 - (8) An individual notified under G.S. 48-2-206 who does not respond in a timely manner or whose consent is not required as determined by the court.
 - (9) **(See editor's note)** An individual whose actions resulted in a conviction under G.S. 14-27.2, G.S. 14-27.2A, or G.S. 14-27.3 and the conception of the minor to be adopted.
- (b) The court may issue an order dispensing with the consent of the following:
- (1) A guardian or an agency that placed the minor upon a finding that the consent is being withheld contrary to the best interest of the minor.
 - (2) A minor 12 or more years of age upon a finding that it is not in the best interest of the minor to require the consent.