



CHAPTER 7B

ARTICLE 9 - DISPOSITIONS

N.C.G.S. § 7B-903.

Dispositional alternatives for abused, neglected, or dependent juvenile.

SOURCE	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT	RETRIEVED	SOURCE FINGERPRINT
General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	S.L. 2025-16, s. 1.11(b) — eighteenth act in the lineage	21 September 2026, 03:33 UTC	22386861a641e27b2ce3da51 - b448dcbc62fa24fb3c484416 - 6e7f3ed9109830b2

§ 7B-903(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) Dismiss the case or continue the case in order to allow the parent, guardian, custodian, caretaker or others to take appropriate action.
- (2) 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 another individual as may be available to the court, subject to conditions applicable to the parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker as the court may specify.
- (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-136, s. 10, effective October 1, 2015, and applicable to actions filed or pending on or after that date.
- (4) Place the juvenile in the custody of a parent, relative, private agency offering placement services, or some other suitable person. If the court determines that the juvenile should be placed in the custody of an individual other than a parent, the court shall verify that the person receiving custody of the juvenile understands the legal significance of the placement and will have adequate resources to care appropriately for the juvenile. The fact that the prospective custodian has provided a stable placement for the juvenile for at least six consecutive months is evidence that the person has adequate resources.
- (5) Appoint a guardian of the person for the juvenile as provided in G.S. 7B-600.

(6) Place the juvenile in the custody of the department of social services in the county of the juvenile's residence. In the case of a juvenile who has legal residence outside the State, the court may place the juvenile in the physical custody of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile is found so that agency may return the juvenile to the responsible authorities in the juvenile's home state. The department is authorized to place the juvenile in any of the following:

a.A licensed foster home or home otherwise authorized by law to provide such care.

b.A facility operated by the department of social services.

c.A facility licensed to provide care to juveniles.

d.Any other home approved by the department, including the home of a relative, nonrelative kin, or other person with legal custody of a sibling of the juvenile.

The department shall not place a juvenile in any unlicensed facility or any facility that is not licensed to provide care for juveniles without the sanction of the court and so designated in the order prior to such placement being made.

§ 7B-903(a1)

In placing a juvenile in out-of-home care 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 the placement is contrary to the best interests of the juvenile. In placing a juvenile in out-of-home care under this section, the court shall also consider whether it is in the juvenile's best interest to remain in the juvenile's community of residence. Placement of a juvenile with a relative outside of this State must be in accordance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

§ 7B-903(a2)

An order under this section placing or continuing the placement of the juvenile in out-of-home care shall contain a finding that the juvenile's continuation in or return to the juvenile's own home would be contrary to the juvenile's health and safety.

§ 7B-903(a3)

An order under this section placing the juvenile in out-of-home care shall contain specific findings as to whether the department has made reasonable efforts to prevent the need for placement of the juvenile. In determining whether efforts to prevent the

placement of the juvenile were reasonable, the juvenile's health and safety shall be the paramount concern.

The court may find that efforts to prevent the need for the juvenile's placement were precluded by an immediate threat of harm to the juvenile. A finding that reasonable efforts were not made by a county department of social services shall not preclude the entry of an order authorizing the juvenile's placement when the court finds that placement is necessary for the protection of the juvenile.

§ 7B-903(a4)

If the court does not place the juvenile with a relative, the court may consider whether nonrelative kin or other persons with legal custody of a sibling of the juvenile are willing and able to provide proper care and supervision of the juvenile in a safe home. The court may order the department to notify the juvenile's State-recognized tribe of the need for custodial care for the purpose of locating relatives or nonrelative kin for placement. The court may order placement of the juvenile with nonrelative kin if the court finds the placement is in the juvenile's best interests.

§ 7B-903(b)

When the court has found that a juvenile has suffered physical abuse and that the individual responsible for the abuse has a history of violent behavior against people, the court shall consider the opinion of the mental health professional who performed an evaluation under G.S. 7B-503(b) before returning the juvenile to the custody of that individual.

§ 7B-903(c)

Repealed by Session Laws 2015-136, s. 10, effective October 1, 2015, and applicable to actions filed or pending on or after that date.

§ 7B-903(d)

The court may order that the juvenile be examined by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other qualified expert as may be needed for the court to determine the needs of the juvenile. Upon completion of the examination, the court shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the juvenile is in need of medical, surgical, psychiatric, psychological, or other treatment and who should pay the cost of the treatment. The county manager, or such person who shall be designated by the chairman of the county commissioners, of the juvenile's residence shall be notified of the hearing and allowed to be heard. Subject to G.S. 7B-903.1, if the court finds the juvenile to be in need of medical, surgical, psychiatric, psychological, or other treatment, the court shall permit the parent or other responsible persons to arrange for treatment. If the parent declines or is unable to make necessary arrangements, the court may order the needed treatment, surgery, or care and the court may order the parent to pay the cost of the

care pursuant to G.S. 7B-904. If the court finds the parent is unable to pay the cost of treatment, the court shall order the county to arrange for treatment of the juvenile and to pay for the cost of the treatment. The county department of social services shall recommend the facility that will provide the juvenile with treatment.

§ 7B-903(e)

If the court determines that the juvenile may be mentally ill or developmentally disabled, the court may order the county department of social services to coordinate with the appropriate representative of the area mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services authority or other managed care organization responsible for managing public funds for mental health and developmental disabilities to develop a treatment plan for the juvenile. The court shall not commit a juvenile directly to a State hospital or developmental center for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and orders purporting to commit a juvenile directly to a State hospital or developmental center for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities shall be void and of no effect. If the court determines that institutionalization is the best service for the juvenile, admission shall be with the voluntary consent of the parent, guardian, or custodian. If the parent, guardian, or custodian refuses to consent to admission to a mental hospital or developmental center for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the signature and consent of the court may be substituted for that purpose. A State hospital or developmental center for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities that refuses admission to a juvenile referred for admission by a court, or discharges a juvenile previously admitted on court referral prior to completion of treatment, shall submit to the court a written report setting out the reasons for denial of admission or discharge and setting out the juvenile's diagnosis, indications of mental illness or intellectual and developmental disabilities, indications of need for treatment, and a statement as to the location of any facility known to have a treatment program for the juvenile in question.

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
18 ACTS

Amendment lineage

The State prints this history as a single parenthetical at the foot of the section. It is reproduced verbatim in the colophon and unpacked below in order of enactment.



Nº	YEAR	ACT	CHARACTER
01	1979	c. 815, s. 1	ENACTED
02	1981	c. 469, s. 19	AMENDED
03	1985	c. 589, s. 5	AMENDED
04	1985	c. 777, s. 1	AMENDED
05	1985	1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 863, s. 2	AMENDED
06	1991	c. 636, s. 19(a)	AMENDED
07	1991	1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 609, s. 3	AMENDED
08	1997	S.L. 1997-516, s. 1A	AMENDED
09	1998	S.L. 1998-202, s. 6	AMENDED
10	1998	S.L. 1998-229, ss. 6, 23	AMENDED
11	1999	S.L. 1999-318, s. 6	AMENDED
12	1999	S.L. 1999-456, s. 60	AMENDED
13	2002	S.L. 2002-164, s. 4.8	AMENDED
14	2003	S.L. 2003-140, s. 9(b)	AMENDED
15	2015	S.L. 2015-136, s. 10	AMENDED
16	2019	S.L. 2019-33, s. 7(b)	AMENDED
17	2021	S.L. 2021-132, s. 1(e)	AMENDED
18	2025	S.L. 2025-16, s. 1.11(b)	AMENDED

APPARATUS II
4 AUTHORITIES

Authorities referenced

Every G.S. cross-reference appearing in the text of this section, in order of first appearance. Nothing is characterized; the operative language is quoted from the section itself.

REFERENCE	APPEARS IN	OPERATIVE LANGUAGE IN THIS SECTION
G.S. 7B-600	(a)(5)	<i>"for the juvenile as provided in"</i>
G.S. 7B-503(b)	(b)	<i>"professional who performed an evaluation under"</i>
G.S. 7B-903.1	(d)	<i>"allowed to be heard. Subject to"</i>
G.S. 7B-904	(d)	<i>"cost of the care pursuant to"</i>

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-903 (2025).

PINPOINT

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-903(a) (2025).

Pinpoint keys are set in the left margin of the text rather than line numbers: subsection designators are stable across editions and paper sizes, line numbers are not.

COLOPHON

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HISTORY PARENTHETICAL, AS PRINTED BY THE STATE

(1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1981, c. 469, s. 19; 1985, c. 589, s. 5; c. 777, s. 1; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 863, s. 2; 1991, c. 636, s. 19(a); 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 609, s. 3; 1997-516, s. 1A; 1998-202, s. 6; 1998-229, ss. 6, 23; 1999-318, s. 6; 1999-456, s. 60; 2002-164, s. 4.8; 2003-140, s. 9(b); 2015-136, s. 10; 2019-33, s. 7(b); 2021-132, s. 1(e); 2025-16, s. 1.11(b).)

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