

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2003

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HOUSE BILL 126

Short Title: Evidence in Juvenile Hearings. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Glazier, Moore (Primary Sponsors); Bordsen, Carney, Gibson, Haire, Insko, Sauls, and Warner.

Referred to: Judiciary IV.

February 27, 2003

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO CLARIFY THE LAW GOVERNING EVIDENCE ADMISSIBLE IN  
CERTAIN JUVENILE HEARINGS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 7B-901 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 7B-901. Dispositional hearing.**

The dispositional hearing may be informal and the court may consider written reports or other evidence concerning the needs of the juvenile. The juvenile and the juvenile's parent, guardian, or custodian shall have an opportunity to present evidence, and they may advise the court concerning the disposition they believe to be in the best interests of the juvenile. The court may consider any evidence, including hearsay evidence as defined in G.S. 8C-1, Rule 801, that the court finds to be relevant, reliable, and necessary to determine the needs of the juvenile and the most appropriate disposition. The court may exclude the public from the hearing unless the juvenile moves that the hearing be open, which motion shall be granted."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 7B-906(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) At every review hearing, the court shall consider information from the parent, the juvenile, the guardian, any foster parent, relative, or preadoptive parent providing care for the child, the custodian or agency with custody, the guardian ad litem, and any other person or agency which will aid in its review. The court may consider any evidence, including hearsay evidence as defined in G.S. 8C-1, Rule 801, that the court finds to be relevant, reliable, and necessary to determine the needs of the juvenile and the most appropriate disposition.

In each case the court shall consider the following criteria and make written findings regarding those that are relevant:

- (1) Services which have been offered to reunite the family, or whether efforts to reunite the family clearly would be futile or inconsistent with

1 the juvenile's safety and need for a safe, permanent home within a  
2 reasonable period of time.

3 (2) Where the juvenile's return home is unlikely, the efforts which have  
4 been made to evaluate or plan for other methods of care.

5 (3) Goals of the foster care placement and the appropriateness of the foster  
6 care plan.

7 (4) A new foster care plan, if continuation of care is sought, that addresses  
8 the role the current foster parent will play in the planning for the  
9 juvenile.

10 (5) Reports on the placements the juvenile has had and any services  
11 offered to the juvenile and the parent, guardian, custodian, or  
12 caretaker.

13 (6) An appropriate visitation plan.

14 (7) If the juvenile is 16 or 17 years of age, a report on an independent  
15 living assessment of the juvenile and, if appropriate, an independent  
16 living plan developed for the juvenile.

17 (8) When and if termination of parental rights should be considered.

18 (9) Any other criteria the court deems necessary."

19 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 7B-907(b) reads as rewritten:

20 "(b) At any permanency planning review, the court shall consider information  
21 from the parent, the juvenile, the guardian, any foster parent, relative or preadoptive  
22 parent providing care for the child, the custodian or agency with custody, the guardian  
23 ad litem, and any other person or agency which will aid it in the court's review. The  
24 court may consider any evidence, including hearsay evidence as defined in G.S. 8C-1,  
25 Rule 801, that the court finds to be relevant, reliable, and necessary to determine the  
26 needs of the juvenile and the most appropriate disposition. At the conclusion of the  
27 hearing, if the juvenile is not returned home, the court shall consider the following  
28 criteria and make written findings regarding those that are relevant:

29 (1) Whether it is possible for the juvenile to be returned home  
30 immediately or within the next six months, and if not, why it is not in  
31 the juvenile's best interests to return home;

32 (2) Where the juvenile's return home is unlikely within six months,  
33 whether legal guardianship or custody with a relative or some other  
34 suitable person should be established, and if so, the rights and  
35 responsibilities which should remain with the parents;

36 (3) Where the juvenile's return home is unlikely within six months,  
37 whether adoption should be pursued and if so, any barriers to the  
38 juvenile's adoption;

39 (4) Where the juvenile's return home is unlikely within six months,  
40 whether the juvenile should remain in the current placement or be  
41 placed in another permanent living arrangement and why;

42 (5) Whether the county department of social services has since the initial  
43 permanency plan hearing made reasonable efforts to implement the  
44 permanent plan for the juvenile;

1 (6) Any other criteria the court deems necessary."

2 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 7B-908(a) reads as rewritten:

3 "(a) The purpose of each placement review is to ensure that every reasonable  
4 effort is being made to provide for a permanent placement plan for the juvenile who has  
5 been placed in the custody of a county director or licensed child-placing agency, which  
6 is consistent with the juvenile's best interests. At each review hearing the court may  
7 consider information from the department of social services, the licensed child-placing  
8 agency, the guardian ad litem, the child, any foster parent, relative, or preadoptive  
9 parent providing care for the child, and any other person or agency the court determines  
10 is likely to aid in the review. The court may consider any evidence, including hearsay  
11 evidence as defined in G.S. 8C-1, Rule 801, that the court finds to be relevant, reliable,  
12 and necessary to determine the needs of the juvenile and the most appropriate  
13 disposition."

14 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 7B-2501(a) reads as rewritten:

15 "(a) The dispositional hearing may be informal, and the court may consider  
16 written reports or other evidence concerning the needs of the juvenile. The court may  
17 consider any evidence, including hearsay evidence as defined in G.S. 8C-1, Rule 801,  
18 that the court finds to be relevant, reliable, and necessary to determine the needs of the  
19 juvenile and the most appropriate disposition."

20 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2003, and applies to acts  
21 and offenses committed on or after that date.