

**No Therapy Exists in a Dependent Child  
Adjudication in Juvenile Court E-Blast**

West's Code of Georgia Annotated

Title 15. Courts

Chapter 11. Juvenile Code (Refs & Annos)

Article 3. Dependency Proceedings (Refs & Annos)

Part 8. Adjudication Hearing Procedures

Ga. Code Ann., § 15-11-181

Derived from former GA ST §15-11-54.

§ 15-11-181. Adjudication hearing; scheduling; persons having  
right to participate; allowable evidence; findings of the court

Effective: January 1, 2014

Currentness

(a) The court shall fix a time for an adjudication hearing. If the alleged dependent child is in foster care, the hearing shall be scheduled for no later than ten days after the filing of the petition alleging dependency. If the alleged dependent child is not in foster care, the adjudication hearing shall be held no later than 60 days after the filing of the petition alleging dependency. If adjudication is not completed within 60 days from the date such child was taken into protective custody, the petition alleging dependency may be dismissed without prejudice.

(b) The following persons shall have the right to participate in the adjudication hearing:

(1) The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the alleged dependent child, unless such person cannot be located or fails to appear in response to the notice;

(2) The attorney and guardian ad litem of the alleged dependent child;

(3) The alleged dependent child, unless the court finds, after considering evidence of harm to such child that will result from his or her presence at the proceeding, that being present is not in the child's best interests;

(4) The attorneys for the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the alleged dependent child if attorneys have been retained or appointed;

(5) The assigned DFCS caseworker; and

(6) The attorney for DFCS.

(c) If the court finds it is in the best interests of the alleged dependent child, the court may allow the following to be present at the adjudication hearing:

(1) Any relative or other persons who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to a child alleged to be a dependent child with whom he or she might be placed;

(2) DFCS employees involved with the case;

(3) An advocate as requested by the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the alleged dependent child; and

(4) Other persons who have knowledge of or an interest in the welfare of such child.

(d) Except as provided in this subsection, the adjudication hearing shall be conducted in accordance with Title 24. Testimony or other evidence relevant to the dependency of a child or the cause of such condition may not be excluded on any ground of privilege, except in the case of:

(1) Communications between a party and his or her attorney; and

(2) Confessions or communications between a priest, rabbi, or duly ordained minister or similar functionary and his or her confidential communicant.

(e) After hearing the evidence, the court shall make and file specific written findings as to whether a child is a dependent child.

(f) If the court finds that a child is not a dependent child, it shall dismiss the petition alleging dependency and order such child discharged from foster care or other restriction previously ordered.

(g) If the court adjudicates a child as a dependent child, the court shall proceed immediately or at a postponed hearing to make a proper disposition of the case.

(h) If the court adjudicates a child as a dependent child, the court shall also make and file a finding whether such dependency is the result of substance abuse by such child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian.

(i) If the disposition hearing is held on the same day as the adjudication hearing, the court shall schedule the dates and times for the first periodic review hearing and for the permanency plan hearing.

#### Credits

Laws 2013, Act 127, § 1-1, eff. Jan. 1, 2014.

#### Notes of Decisions (56)

Ga. Code Ann., § 15-11-181, GA ST § 15-11-181

The statutes and Constitution are current with legislation passed during the 2016 Session of the Georgia General Assembly. The statutes are subject to changes by the Georgia Code Commission.



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