

§ 7B-908. Post termination of parental rights' placement court review.

(a) The purpose of each placement review is to ensure that every reasonable effort is being made to provide for the permanent plan for the juvenile who has been placed in the custody of a county director or licensed child-placing agency, which is consistent with the juvenile's best interests. At each review hearing the court may consider information from the department of social services, the licensed child-placing agency, the guardian ad litem, the child, the person providing care for the child, and any other person or agency the court determines is likely to aid in the 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.

(b) The court shall conduct a placement review not later than six months from the date of the termination hearing when both parents' parental rights have been terminated by a petition or motion brought by any person or agency designated in G.S. 7B-1103(a)(2) through (6), or one parent's parental rights have been terminated by court order and the other parent's parental rights have been relinquished under Chapter 48 of the General Statutes, and a county director or licensed child-placing agency has custody of the juvenile. The court shall conduct reviews every six months thereafter until the juvenile is the subject of a decree of adoption:

- (1) No more than 30 days and no less than 15 days prior to each review, the clerk shall give notice of the review to the juvenile if the juvenile is at least 12 years of age, the legal custodian or guardian of the juvenile, the person providing care for the juvenile, the guardian ad litem, if any, and any other person or agency the court may specify. The department of social services shall either provide to the clerk the name and address of the person providing care for the child for notice under this subsection or file written documentation with the clerk that the child's current care provider was sent notice of hearing. Only the juvenile, the legal custodian or guardian of the juvenile, the person providing care for the juvenile, and the guardian ad litem may participate in the review hearings, except as otherwise directed by the court. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to make the person a party to the proceeding solely based on receiving notice and the right to be heard. Any individual whose parental rights have been terminated or has executed a relinquishment that is no longer revocable shall not be considered a party to the proceeding unless an appeal of the order terminating parental rights is pending, and a court has stayed the order pending the appeal.
- (2) If a guardian ad litem for the juvenile has not been appointed previously by the court in the termination proceeding, the court, at the initial six-month review hearing, may appoint a guardian ad litem to represent the juvenile. The court may continue the case for such time as is necessary for the guardian ad litem to become familiar with the facts of the case.

(c) The court shall consider at least the following in its review and make written findings regarding the following that are relevant:

- (1) The adequacy of the permanency plans developed by the county department of social services or a licensed child-placing agency for a permanent placement in the juvenile's best interests and the efforts of the department or agency to implement the plans.
- (2) Whether the juvenile has been listed for adoptive placement with NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network or any other child-specific recruitment program or whether there is an exemption to listing that the court finds is in the child's best interest.

- (3) The efforts previously made by the department or agency to find a permanent placement for the juvenile.
- (4) Whether the current placement is in the juvenile's best interest.
- (d) The court, after making findings of fact, shall do one of the following it finds to be in the best interests of the child:
 - (1) Affirm the county department's or child placing agency's plan.
 - (2) Order a different plan designated in G.S. 7B-906.2(a).
- (d1) The court may (i) order concurrent permanent plans if the court finds concurrent permanency planning to be in the best interests of the juvenile and (ii) specify efforts that are necessary to accomplish a permanent plan designated in subdivisions (1) or (2) of subsection (d) of this section that is in the best interests of the juvenile. If a juvenile is not placed with prospective adoptive parents as selected in G.S. 7B-1112.1, the court may order a placement that the court finds to be in the juvenile's best interest after considering the department's recommendations.
- (e) If the juvenile is the subject of a decree of adoption prior to the date scheduled for the review, within 10 days of receiving notice that the adoption decree has been entered, the department of social services shall file with the court and serve on any guardian ad litem for the juvenile written notice of the entry. The adoption decree shall not be filed in the court file. The review hearing shall be cancelled with notice of said cancellation given by the clerk to all persons previously notified.
- (e1) The order shall be reduced to writing, signed, and entered no later than 30 days following the completion of the hearing. If the order is not entered within 30 days following completion of the hearing, the clerk of court for juvenile matters shall schedule a subsequent hearing at the first session of court scheduled for the hearing of juvenile matters following the 30-day period to determine and explain the reason for the delay and to obtain any needed clarification regarding the contents of the order. The order shall be entered within 10 days of the subsequent hearing required by this subsection.
- (f) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-295, s. 10, effective October 1, 2011, and applicable to actions filed or pending on or after that date. (1983, c. 607, s. 1; 1993, c. 537, s. 2; 1998-202, s. 6; 1998-229, ss. 9, 26; 1999-456, s. 60; 2003-62, s. 4; 2005-398, s. 8; 2007-276, s. 5; 2009-311, s. 8; 2011-295, s. 10; 2013-129, s. 27; 2017-161, s. 9; 2019-33, s. 12; 2021-100, s. 12.)