

Family Court Time Standards

Originally Adopted: September 1999
Amended by the Family Law Advisory Commission 2025

1. ***Domestic Cases***

- Unless otherwise specified, “days” are calendar days.
- These time frames represent **maximum** time limits that are “goals.”
- All orders should be filed within 30 days following the conclusion of a hearing. A judge may allow additional time to file an order in complex cases.

For (Permanent) Alimony and Equitable Distribution Matters:

<u>Event:</u>	<u>Time from Filing of Complaint:</u>
a. Scheduling and Discovery Conference	120 days
b. Completion of ADR*	210 days
c. Final Pretrial Conference	240 days
d. Start of Trial	270 days
e. Order Entered:	
(1) in 90% of cases	Within 270 days
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 365 days

*Completion of mediation session(s) – not when report is filed

Post-Separation Support:

<u>Event:</u>	<u>Time from Filing of Complaint:</u>
Order Entered:	
(1) in 75% of cases	Within 90 days
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 150 days

Child Support: G.S. 50-32 requires that all child support cases, except where paternity is at issue, be completed within 60 days of the date of filing. This period may be extended for thirty days under limited circumstances.



Event:**Time from Filing of Complaint:**

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| a. <u>Temporary</u> Orders Entered, if requested by one or both parties and do not involve paternity determinations: | |
| (1) in 75% of cases | Within 45 days |
| (2) in 100% of cases | Within 60 days |
| b. <u>Permanent</u> Orders Entered | Within 365 days |

Child Custody:**Event:****Time from Filing of Complaint:**

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| a. <u>Temporary</u> Orders Entered, if requested by one or both parties: | |
| in 100% of cases | Within 90 days |
| b. Mediation Orientation Session Scheduled | |
| in 100% of cases | Within 45 days |
| c. Mediation Sessions(s) Completed: | |
| (1) in 90% of cases | Within 90 days |
| (2) in 100% of cases | Within 150 days |
| d. Permanent Orders Entered: | |
| (1) in 90% of cases | Within 180 days |
| (2) in 100% of cases | Within 360 days |

2. *Juvenile Delinquency/Undisciplined Cases*

- Unless otherwise specified, “days” are calendar days and are counted from the date the petition is served on the juvenile until the date the hearing is completed.
- These time frames represent maximum time limits that are “goals.” All orders should be entered within 30 days following the conclusion of a hearing. A judge may allow additional time to file an order in complex cases.

Event:**Time from Service on Juvenile unless otherwise noted:**

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| a. Adjudicatory Hearing Completed for Misdemeanor Charges: | |
| (1) in 75% of cases | Within 60 days |
| (2) in 100% of cases | Within 90 days |
| b. Adjudicatory Hearing Completed (Class H - I Felony): | |
| (1) in 75% of cases | Within 90 days |
| (2) in 100% of cases | Within 120 days |
| c. Adjudicatory Hearing Completed (Class A - G Felony): | |
| (1) in 75% of cases | Within 150 days |



(2) in 100% of cases	Within 180 days
d. Dispositional Hearing Completed:	
(1) in 90% of cases	Within 30 days of adjudication
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 60 days of adjudication
e. Secure Custody Hearing:	
in 100% of cases	Within 5 days of first secure custody order
f. First Appearance Hearing:	
(1) in 75% of cases	Within 10 days of petition filing
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 21 days of petition filing
g. Probable Cause Hearing Completed (Class H-I Felony):	
(1) in 75% of cases	Within 90 days of first appearance
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 120 days of first appearance
h. Probable Cause Hearing Completed/Indictment (Class A-G Felony):	
(1) in 75% of cases	Within 120 days of first appearance
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 150 days of first appearance
i. Transfer Hearing (Automatic) Completed for 16-17-year-olds (Class A-G Felony):	
(1) in 75% of cases	Within 90 days of first appearance
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 120 days of first appearance
j. Transfer Hearing (Discretionary) completed for 13-17-year-olds (Class H-I Felony):	
(1) in 75% of cases	Within 150 days of first appearance
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 180 days of first appearance
k. Transfer Hearing Completed for 13-15-year-olds (Class A-G Felony):	
(1) in 75% of cases	Within 180 days of first appearance
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 210 days of first appearance

3. *Juvenile Abuse/Neglect/Dependency Cases*

- Unless otherwise noted, “days” are calendar days and are counted from the date the petition is filed.
- Not all of the stages listed below will occur in every case (e.g., the child may not be taken into nonsecure custody, or the petition may be dismissed).
- These time frames represent **maximum** time limits that are “goals.” In every case, the child’s best interest is the paramount goal.
- These time frames are intended to be consistent with the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act provisions and North Carolina statutory provisions.
- Time standards noted with an asterisk (*) reflect the North Carolina required timeframes as codified in the North Carolina Juvenile Code. It is the purpose of this Committee to comply with the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act provisions and North Carolina statutory provisions. However, given the realities of an ever-expanding court system, the Committee has included additional time frame recommendations, if a case cannot strictly meet the timeline requirements of the Juvenile Code, and only as allowed by the presiding District



Court. Pursuant to NCGS 7B-803, the court may grant a continuance of a scheduled hearing for good cause to receive additional evidence. Otherwise, continuances shall be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

- All orders should be filed within 30 days following the conclusion of a hearing. A judge may allow additional time to file an order in complex cases.

Event	Time Standard
a. Nonsecure Custody Order Entered	Same day petition is filed
b. First Nonsecure Custody Hearing	7 days* from removal
c. Second Nonsecure Custody Hearing	No more than 7 business days* (including holidays) after first hearing; Subsequent nonsecure custody hearings at intervals of no more than 30 days*)
d. Pre-Adjudication Hearing	
a. in 100% of cases	At or before adjudication
e. Adjudication Hearing Completed	
(1) in 90% of cases	Within 60 days* from filing of petition
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 120 days from filing of petition
f. Disposition Hearing Completed	
(1) in 90% of cases	Within 30 days* from date of adjudication hearing
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 60 days from date of adjudication hearing
g. First Review Hearing Completed (when custody is not removed)	
(1) in 90% of cases	Within 90 days from date of disposition hearing
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 120 days from date of disposition hearing
h. First Permanency Planning Hearing Completed (when custody has been removed)	
(1) 90% of cases	Within 90 days from date of disposition hearing
(2) 100% of cases	Within 120 days from date of disposition hearing
i. Subsequent Review & Permanency Planning Hearings (PPH)	
(1) 90% of cases	Within 180 days from date of previous PPH/review hearing
(2) 100% of cases	Within 210 days from date of previous PPH/review hearing
j. Reunification (from time of removal)	
(1) in 75% of cases	330 days
(2) in 100% of cases	510 days
k. Implementation of Other Permanent Plan	
(1) in 90% of cases	330 days
(2) in 100% of cases	510 days
l. Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition / motion filed in all cases where adoption has been made a permanent plan for a juvenile	
(1) in 90% of cases	Within 60 days of order changing permanent plan to adoption
(2) in 100% of cases	Within 90 days of order changing permanent plan to adoption



- m. TPR Adjudicatory Hearing Commenced after filing of TPR petition / motion
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| (1) in 90% of cases | Within 90 days of filing |
| (2) in 100% of cases | Within 180 days of filing |

- n. TPR Adjudicatory and Disposition Hearings Completed
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| (1) in 90% of cases | Within 120 days from filing |
| (2) in 100% of cases | Within 210 days from filing |

4. Orders for All Family Court Cases

- All orders should be filed within **30 days** following the conclusion of a hearing.
- A judge may allow additional time to file an order in complex cases.

