

# Purpose

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 15-11-1, the purpose of the juvenile code is as follows: to secure for each who comes within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court such care and guidance, preferably in his or her own home, as will secure his or her moral, emotional, mental, and physical welfare as well as the safety of both the child and community. It is the intent of the General Assembly to promote a juvenile justice system that will protect the community, impose accountability for violations of law, provide treatment and rehabilitation, and equip juvenile offenders with the ability to live responsibly and productively. It is the intent of the General Assembly to preserve and strengthen family relationships, countenancing the removal of a child from his or her home only when state intervention is essential to protect such child and enable him or her to live in security and stability. In every proceeding, this chapter seeks to guarantee due process of law, as required by the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Georgia, through which every child and his or her parent and all other interested parties are assured fair hearings at which legal rights are recognized and enforced. Above all, this chapter shall be literally construed to reflect that the paramount child welfare policy of this state is to determine and ensure the best interests of its children.



## Types of Court Cases

The Juvenile Court is an independent court organized under Chapter 11 of Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia. The Juvenile Court is dedicated to serving the residents of both Hall and Dawson Counties.

- Hall County Juvenile Court is dedicated to serving the residents of Hall County by hearing all cases involving:
  - Allegations of dependency (abuse and neglect)
  - CHINS (Children in Need of Services) which includes truancy (children not attending school regularly), underage drinking consumption, curfew violation, unruly (habitually disobedient of the reasonable commands of parents), and runaway (leaving home without permission) for children under the age of 18
  - Delinquency (children under the age of 17 charged with criminal acts)
  - Traffic violations concerning children under the age of 17 found within its jurisdiction
- Dawson County Juvenile Court is dedicated to serving the residents of Dawson County by hearing all cases involving:
  - Allegations of deprivation of children under the age of 18
  - Unruly conduct
  - Delinquency (children under the age of 17 charged with criminal acts)
  - Traffic violations concerning children under the age of 17 found within its jurisdiction

## **Parental Rights**

Juvenile Court also conducts trials in cases where there is an action to terminate parental rights, due to chronic abuse and/or neglect, or abandonment of a dependent child, so that children can achieve permanency through adoption, permanent guardianship, or another approved permanent living arrangement. A permanent home can be either with suitable family members or with an adoptive family.

## **Custody, Child Support & Guardianship**

Juvenile Court can also consider cases such as:

- A father attempting to legitimate a child born out of wedlock
- Custody and child support determination cases transferred from the Superior Court
- Petitions to establish or terminate temporary guardianships transferred from Probate Court.
- Petitions for permanent guardianships in cases in which the child has already been determined to be a dependent child.

## **Treatment, Rehabilitation or Supervision**

If, after adjudication of a delinquent or CHINS offense, a dependent child is found to be in need of treatment, rehabilitation, or supervision to safely remain in the community, the court will provide access to high quality, appropriate treatment programs whenever feasible. Supervision is provided by Hall County Juvenile Probation Officers or the Department of Juvenile Justice, when appropriate.

## **Eligibility for Appointment**

The judges of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit Juvenile Court are appointed to a 4-year term by the Superior Court judges. A judge must be at least 30 years of age, a citizen of the state for at least 3 years, and have practiced law for at least 5 years.

- **Maintaining Eligibility**

The judges are required to attend a minimum of 12 hours of specialized training each year to maintain eligibility for the position. The Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia certifies the training.

- **Case Assignments**

Dependency cases are assigned to the judge by the Clerk of Court upon the filing of a Juvenile Complaint. Though there are exceptions, once a child is assigned to a judge all of that child's subsequent dependency or custody complaints will also be assigned to that judge. Other types of cases are scheduled for court at which time a juvenile judge will be presiding.

## **Hall County Juvenile Probation Officers**

- **Duties & Responsibilities**

The Hall County Juvenile Probation Officers are the direct contact agents with the youths on probation. Most Probation Officers are assigned to children who attend specific schools so that the officers work in a small geographic area. The officer's job is to help the child succeed on probation, but they are also responsible for enforcing the directives issued by the Juvenile Court.

## • **Complying With Court Orders**

The Juvenile Probation Officers visits the youthful offenders at school, home, and other locations on any given day or night to ensure compliance with the Juvenile Court's orders. Any violation of the court's orders by a juvenile offender is referred to the assigned Probation Officer for recommendation to the Juvenile Court for consequences. The Juvenile Probation Officer is required to maintain a detailed record of contacts and conduct of their assigned juvenile offender.

## **New Online Payment Process - Options**

Hall County Juvenile Court is pleased to announce we are now accepting credit card payments. Parents and/or youth can now pay with a credit/debit card over the phone, in-person at the reception window, and online. Please note, the youths will need their date of birth AND the case number to pay online or by phone.

By phone:

1-800-262-0128

Online Payments

[Traffic Fines](#)

[Supervision, CHINS, Informal Adjustment, Traffic Informal adjustment](#)

[Restitution or Community Safety/Diversion](#)

**\*Juvenile Court will also continue to accept money orders and/or a cashiers check.**

## **Dawson County - Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)**

The Dawson County Department of Juvenile Justice is the direct contact agent with the youths on probation. Most Probation Officers are assigned to children who attend specific schools so that the officers work in a small geographic area. The officer's job is to help the child succeed on probation, but he/she is also responsible for enforcing the directives issued by the Court. The DJJ Officer performs frontline duties by visiting with the youthful offender at school, home and other locations on any given day or night to ensure compliance with the Court's orders. Any violation of the Court's orders by a juvenile offender is referred to the assigned Probation Officer for recommendation to the Court for consequences. The Juvenile Probation Officer is required to maintain a detailed record of contacts and conduct of his/her assigned juvenile offender.

## **Family Therapists**

Family therapists assist the Juvenile Court. The therapists have a master's degree from an accredited college or university. The therapists advise probation officers and judges on problem cases as well as provide professional assistance in crisis intervention, individual, family and group therapy for the Juvenile Court's clients.

## Family Treatment Court

The Family Treatment Court provides timely comprehensive services to substance abusing parents who are facing the loss of their children to foster care. To learn more, visit the Family Treatment Court [webpages](#).



*Juvenile Court Judges (2023)*

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