

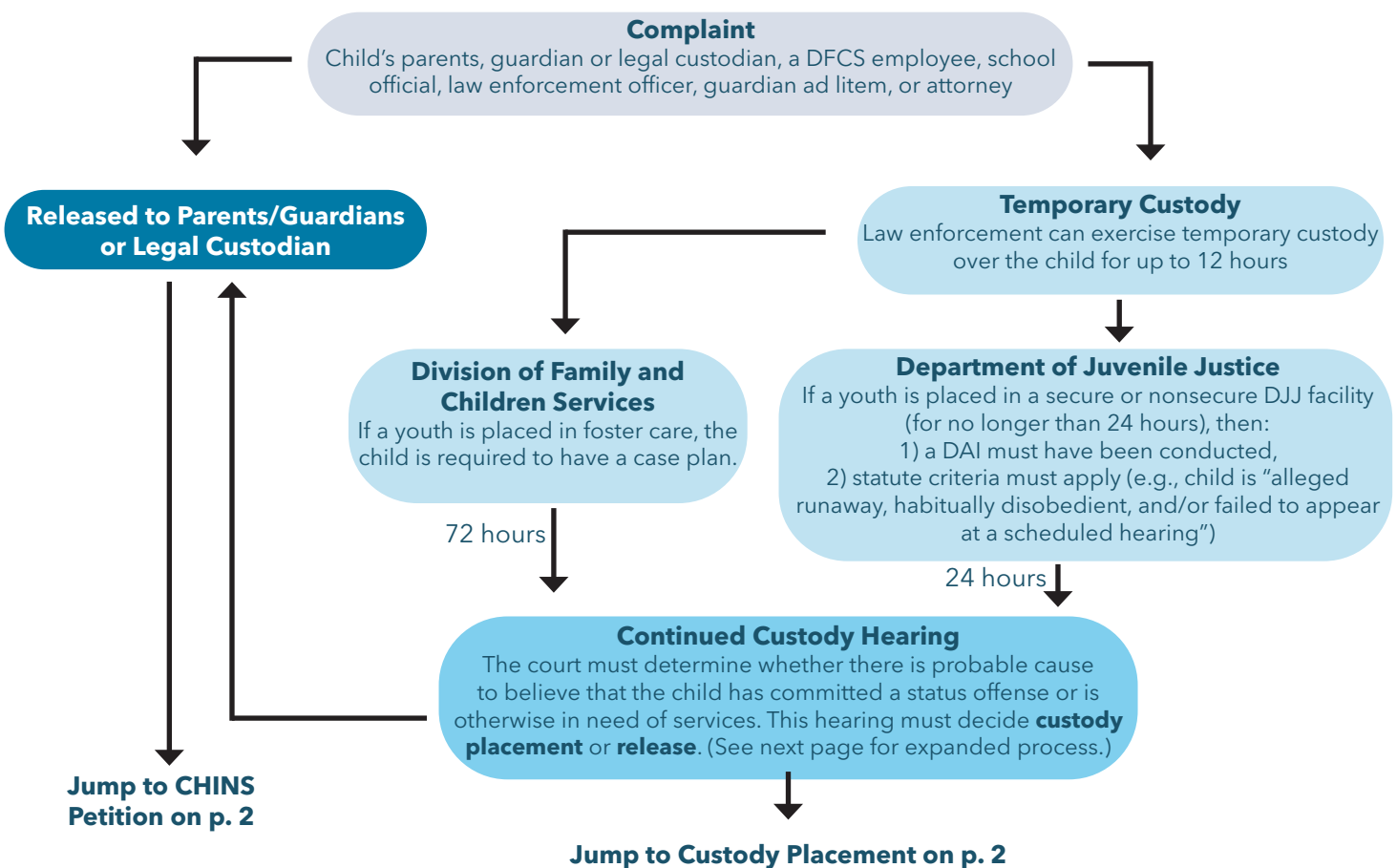


Georgia Juvenile Justice Process for Children in Need of Services (CHINS)

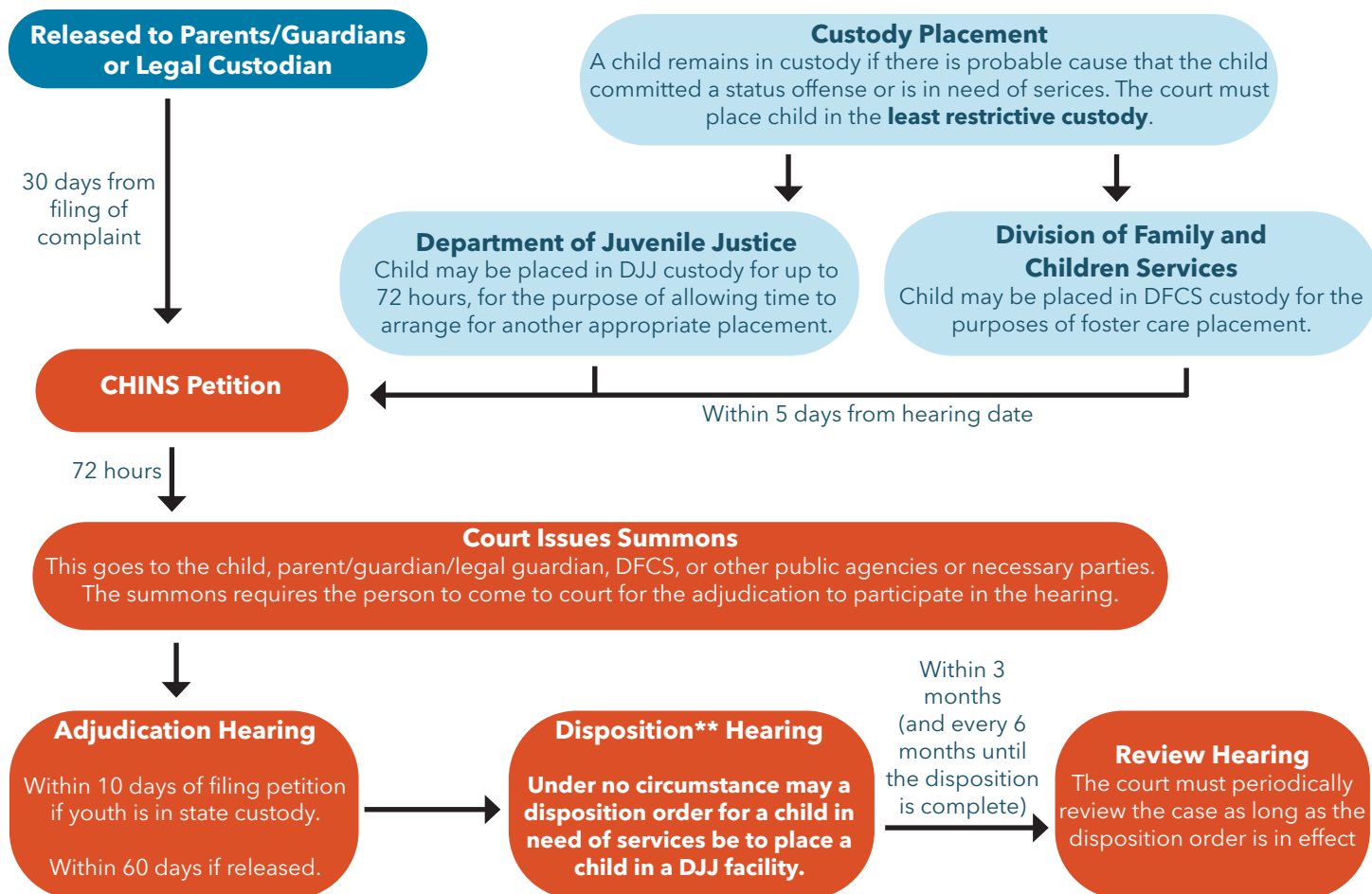
A “**Child in Need of Services**” under Georgia law means a child who is in need of care, guidance, counseling, structure, supervision, treatment, or rehabilitation AND meets one of the following criteria: (O.C.G.A. 15-11-2)

- Habitually truant from school
- Habitually disobedient of the reasonable commands of his or her parent/guardian/legal custodian
- Runaway
- Committed an offense applicable only to a child
- Wanders or loiters about the streets, highway, or any public place, between the hours of 12:00 A.M and 5:00 A.M.
- Disobeys the terms of supervision contained in a court order which has been directed to such child, who has been adjudicated a CHINS
- Patronized any bar where alcoholic beverages are being sold, unaccompanied by his or her parent parent/guardian/legal custodian, or who possesses alcoholic beverages
- Committed a delinquent act and is in need of supervision but not in need of treatment or rehabilitation

Under Georgia law, a parent, guardian, legal custodian, children meeting certain criteria may be brought before the court as a Child in Need of Services (CHINS). In these cases, services are provided in an attempt to divert the child away from delinquency*. The following is a map of the CHINS process.



*For more information regarding the delinquency process, please visit our Georgia Juvenile Justice Process for Delinquency Cases factsheet.



**Potential dispositions include: remain at home with or without conditions; probation; community service; restitution; or after or evening school programming. These are often a condition of probation.

Terms to Know:

Case Plan: If a child is alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of services and is placed in foster care, the child shall be required to have a case plan which addresses the child and parents' strengths and needs, the problems contributing to the child's behaviors, identification of the least restrictive placement for the child, and an assessment of services available to the child.

Least Restrictive Custody: The level of custody which safeguards the child's best interests and protect the community (i.e. release to parent, foster care, other court-approved placement that is not secure, or secure residential facility). (OCGA 15-11-404)

Nonsecure Facility: Nonsecure residential facilities are community residential facilities that provide 24-hour care in a residential setting that are not hardware secured. These nonsecure community residential programs include group homes, emergency shelters, wilderness/outdoor therapeutic programs, and other placements that provide 24-hour care in a residential setting. (OCGA 15-11-2(49))

Secure Facility: Secure facility is defined as a hardware secure residential institution operated by or on behalf of DJJ and shall include a youth development center or a regional youth detention center. (OCGA 15-11-2(67))