



Ohio Revised Code

Section 2151.27 Complaint involving child.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

(A)(1) Subject to division (A)(2) of this section, any person having knowledge of a child who appears to have violated section 2151.87 of the Revised Code or to be a juvenile traffic offender or to be an unruly, abused, neglected, or dependent child may file a sworn complaint with respect to that child in the juvenile court of the county in which the child has a residence or legal settlement or in which the violation, unruliness, abuse, neglect, or dependency allegedly occurred. If an alleged abused, neglected, or dependent child is taken into custody pursuant to division (D) of section 2151.31 of the Revised Code or is taken into custody pursuant to division (A) of section 2151.31 of the Revised Code without the filing of a complaint and placed into shelter care pursuant to division (C) of that section, a sworn complaint shall be filed with respect to the child before the end of the next day after the day on which the child was taken into custody. The sworn complaint may be upon information and belief, and, in addition to the allegation that the child committed the violation or is an unruly, abused, neglected, or dependent child, the complaint shall allege the particular facts upon which the allegation that the child committed the violation or is an unruly, abused, neglected, or dependent child is based.

(2) Any person having knowledge of a child who appears to be an unruly child for being an habitual truant may file a sworn complaint with respect to that child and the parent, guardian, or other person having care of the child in the juvenile court of the county in which the child has a residence or legal settlement or in which the child is supposed to attend public school. The sworn complaint may be upon information and belief and shall contain the following allegations:

(a) That the child is an unruly child for being an habitual truant and, in addition, the particular facts upon which that allegation is based;

(b) That the parent, guardian, or other person having care of the child has failed to cause the child's attendance at school in violation of section 3321.38 of the Revised Code and, in addition, the particular facts upon which that allegation is based.



(B) If a child, before arriving at the age of eighteen years, allegedly commits an act for which the child may be adjudicated an unruly child and if the specific complaint alleging the act is not filed or a hearing on that specific complaint is not held until after the child arrives at the age of eighteen years, the court has jurisdiction to hear and dispose of the complaint as if the complaint were filed and the hearing held before the child arrived at the age of eighteen years.

(C) If the complainant in a case in which a child is alleged to be an abused, neglected, or dependent child desires permanent custody of the child or children, temporary custody of the child or children, whether as the preferred or an alternative disposition, or the placement of the child in a planned permanent living arrangement, the complaint shall contain a prayer specifically requesting permanent custody, temporary custody, or the placement of the child in a planned permanent living arrangement.

(D) Any person with standing under applicable law may file a complaint for the determination of any other matter over which the juvenile court is given jurisdiction by section 2151.23 of the Revised Code. The complaint shall be filed in the county in which the child who is the subject of the complaint is found or was last known to be found.

(E) A public children services agency, acting pursuant to a complaint or an action on a complaint filed under this section, is not subject to the requirements of section 3127.23 of the Revised Code.

(F) Upon the filing of a complaint alleging that a child is an unruly child, the court may hold the complaint in abeyance pending the child's successful completion of actions that constitute a method to divert the child from the juvenile court system. The method may be adopted by a county pursuant to divisions (D) and (E) of section 121.37 of the Revised Code or it may be another method that the court considers satisfactory. If the child completes the actions to the court's satisfaction, the court may dismiss the complaint. If the child fails to complete the actions to the court's satisfaction, the court may consider the complaint.

(G) Upon the filing of a complaint that a child is an unruly child that is based solely on a child being an habitual truant, the court shall consider an alternative to adjudication, including actions that constitute a method to divert the child from the juvenile court system, using the Rules of Juvenile Procedure, or by any other means if such an alternative is available to the court and the child has not



already participated or failed to complete one of the available alternatives. The court shall consider the complaint only as a matter of last resort.

(H) If a complaint that a child is an unruly child based on the child being an habitual truant proceeds to consideration by the court, the prosecution shall bear the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt the following:

(1) That the child is of compulsory school age, as defined in section 3321.01 of the Revised Code;

(2) That the child was absent without legitimate excuse for absence from the public school the child was supposed to attend for thirty or more consecutive hours, forty-two or more hours in one school month, or seventy-two or more hours in a school year.

The child may assert as an affirmative defense the fact that the child did participate in, or made satisfactory progress on, any interventions or other alternatives to adjudication as described in section 3321.191 of the Revised Code.