

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 10:</b> Adoption/Permanency	<b>Effective Date:</b> July 1, 2018
	<b>Section 1:</b> Planning for Adoption - Overview	<b>Version:</b> 4

<b>STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will convene a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting and/or Case Plan Conference to discuss adoption planning and identify any needed services for a child in out-of-home care with a permanency plan of adoption. See [Practice Guidance](#) and policy [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#) for additional information.

The process of adoption planning for a child in out-of-home care with a permanency plan of adoption may be initiated:

1. When a court rules that reasonable efforts to reunify the family are not required;
2. When a child has been under a dispositional decree for at least six (6) months with no significant progress toward a plan of reunification. See policy [6.12 Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights \(TPR\)](#) for further guidance; or
3. At the filing of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). See [10.A Tool: Termination of Parental Rights \(TPR\) Adoption Checklist](#) for further guidance.

**Note:** DCS will not sign the [Consent to Adoption \(SF 12582\)](#) until a prospective adoptive parent has been identified and:

- a. The period of appeal for the TPR has passed, or
- b. Any final appellate opinion related to the TPR has been certified and the period for appeal has passed on any issues remanded to the juvenile court, and
- c. The negotiations for Adoption Subsidy have been negotiated and finalized.

In accordance with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 (MEPA-IEP), DCS will not delay or deny the adoptive placement of a child based on the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive resource family or the child involved. If a Native American child is involved, refer to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). See policy [2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act](#) for further guidance.

DCS will ensure that all children in out-of-home care with a permanency plan of adoption receive age appropriate services (e.g., individual counseling and homebased services) from a service provider in order to prepare the child for the adoption process.

DCS will conduct a diligent search throughout the life of the case to locate all possible family members to discuss adoption, followed by searching for a non-relative potential adoptive family for all children with a permanency plan of adoption.

**Code References**

1. [IC 31-34-21-4: Notice of case review; testimony in periodic case review](#)
2. [IC 31-34-21-5.7: Permanency plan; requirement; approval; reports and orders not required](#)

3. [IC 31-9-2-99.2 Prospective Adoptive Parent](#)
4. [25 U.S.C. §1903\(4\): Indian Child Welfare Definitions](#)
5. [25 U.S.C. §1911: Indian tribe jurisdiction over Indian child custody proceedings](#)
6. [25 U.S.C. §1913: Parental rights; voluntary termination](#)
7. [25 U.S.C. §1915: Placement of Indian children](#)
8. [42 U.S.C. Sec. 1996b: Interethnic Adoption](#)

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Update the [Case Plan \(SF 2956\)](#) to reflect the new court approved permanency plan;
2. Ensure the following persons are notified of the court's ruling regarding the permanency plan:
  - a. The child (if age and developmentally appropriate),
  - b. Child's parent, guardian, or custodian, and attorney of record,
  - c. Resource parent(s),
  - d. Mental health provider or therapist, if applicable,
  - e. Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), if applicable,
  - f. Members of the CFT,
  - g. Any fit and willing relative or person who DCS knows has a significant relationship to the child, and
  - h. Prospective adoptive parent, named in an adoption petition, if consent has been received or TPR has been filed. See policies [6.4 Providing Notice](#) and [6.11 Permanency Hearing](#) for further guidance;
3. Begin the legal process for TPR. See policies [6.12 Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights](#) and [6.13 Voluntary Termination of Parental Rights](#) for further guidance;
4. Identify the steps necessary to move the child to permanency by adoption. Utilize [10.A Tool: Termination of Parental Rights/Adoption checklist](#) for additional guidance.
5. Discuss with the resource parent their role in helping prepare the child for the adoption process. See policy, [10.4 Resource Parent's Role in Preparing the Child for Adoption](#) for further guidance;

**Note:** This discussion should take place whether or not the resource parent is the prospective adoptive family.

6. Prepare the child for adoption. See policy [10.3 Preparing the child for Adoption](#) for further guidance;
7. Determine the child's eligibility for the Indiana Adoption Program. See policy, [10.6 Making an Indiana Adoption Program Referral](#) for further guidance;
8. Complete the Child Social Summary within 45 days of changing the permanency plan to adoption. See policy, [10.11 Child Social Summary](#) for additional assistance;
9. Contact the Adoption Consultant regarding recruiting, interviewing, and selecting a prospective adoptive family, if a home has not been identified;
10. Start the process for determining eligibility for adoption assistance benefits. See policy, [10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview \(AAP and SAS\)](#) for further guidance;
11. Complete a written [adoption summary](#) for the court within 60 days of the date the adoption petition is filed, whether or not consents have been signed;

**Note:** The [adoption summary](#) may not contain information concerning the financial circumstances of the prospective adoptive parent or any recommendation regarding a request for subsidy by the prospective adoptive parent.

12. Ensure the prospective adoptive parent has contact information for the Adoption Consultant to access [post adoption services \(PAS\)](#);  
**Note:** The FCM should provide the prospective adoptive parent with the [PAS](#) brochure and [Adoption Consultant map](#). This information is also available on the DCS website.
13. Explain the [Explanation of Adoption Summary \(SF 56527\)](#) and obtain required signatures; and
14. Upload all documentation into the case management system.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Staff the case with the assigned FCM and make recommendations regarding the permanency plan;
2. Ensure the [Case Plan \(SF 2956\)](#) has been updated to reflect the new permanency plan;
3. Ensure the [10.B Tool: Child Social Summary](#) has been completed and forwarded to the Adoption Consultant in a timely manner, if applicable;
4. Ensure the [Explanation of Adoption Summary \(SF 56527\)](#) has been explained and all necessary signatures obtained;
5. Assist the FCM as needed with the adoption process;
6. Review and approve, if necessary, any services needed for the child or the prospective adoptive family; and
7. Ensure all documentation is uploaded into the case management system.

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### **Child and Family Team Meetings and the TPR Process**

1. CFT Meetings may be used to determine transitional services, planning, and to address closure. Two (2) separate CFT Meetings may be necessary, one for parent whose rights might be terminated and another one for the prospective adoptive parent. Separate CFT Meetings are not required if parents and prospective adoptive parents are willing to meet together;

**Note:** It is best practice to have an identified prospective adoptive parent prior to TPR.

2. Following completion of TPR, parents whose rights have been terminated may be included in the CFT meeting process, if they are deemed appropriate by the team; and
3. Other appropriate family members and supports to the child may also be included in the CFT Meeting following the completion of a TPR.

### **Adoption Summary**

The adoption summary is submitted to the court and provides the court with the following information:

1. FCM's name;
2. Petitioner's name;
3. Child's name;
4. Adoption Cause Number;
5. Wardship date;

6. TPR/ Consents (Date);

**Note:** It is important to include this information for all identified alleged fathers.

7. DCS Consents for Adoption (document the status of consent if not yet signed);

8. Adoption staffing date;

9. Adoptive placement date;

10. Adoptive placement approval (by whom/date);

11. Summary about the child. (talk about the former environment of the child and the child's health in this section);

12. Summary about the child's sibling(s);

13. Summary about the biological parent(s);

14. Summary about the adoptive family (talk about the suitability of the home for the child in this section):

a. Adoptive parent,

b. Children of adoptive parent,

c. Parenting and discipline,

d. Home and community, and

e. Substantiated reports of CA/N of adoptive parent.

15. DCS' evaluation and recommendations for placement, including the strengths, needs, and concerns for the placement and any information about substantiated reports of CA/N;

16. FCM's signature;

17. FCM Supervisor's signature; and

18. Signature of the Local Office Director (LOD) or designee.

### **Post Adoption Services (PAS)**

The adoptive parent may, at any time, submit a request to DCS for a PAS referral on behalf of the adoptive child or family. The adoptive parent must contact the DCS Adoption Consultant in the region of his or her residence to initiate a referral for services. The Adoption Consultant will complete a referral to an appropriate service provider for purposes of an assessment and creation of a service delivery plan tailored to the particular needs of the adoptive child and family.

**Note:** A request for [PAS](#) may not be submitted prior to the finalization of adoption.

### **FORMS AND TOOLS**

1. [10.A Tool: Termination of Parental Rights \(TPR\)/Adoption Checklist](#)
2. [10.B Tool: Child Social Summary](#)
3. [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#) – Available in the case management system
4. [Explanation of Adoption Summary \(SF 56527\)](#)
5. [Consent to Adoption \(SF 12582\)](#)

### **RELATED INFORMATION**

N/A