

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 10:</b> Adoption/Permanency	<b>Effective Date:</b> August 1, 2008
	<b>Section 2:</b> Assessing the Child's Readiness for Adoption	<b>Version:</b> 1

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>OLD POLICY: 709.1</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will ensure that all children with a permanency plan of adoption receive an assessment to determine their readiness and willingness to be adopted. This assessment will include, but is not limited to:

1. A review of the child's case record including the birth family history; and
2. Personal interview's with the following:
  - a. The child, if age and developmentally appropriate,
  - b. The child's siblings, if applicable,
  - c. The child's resource parent(s),
  - d. Educational, medical, and mental health professionals who have worked with the child, and
  - e. When appropriate, other individuals who have a significant relationship with the child.

DCS will utilize the Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting or the Case Plan Conference to assess a child's readiness for adoption and address issues of separation and attachment.

DCS will ensure that all children with a permanency plan of adoption have an opportunity to have a [Lifebook](#) completed, and will assist in this process by providing the child and/or preadoptive family with any pertinent family history and pictures, if available, of the child's birth family.

Code Reference

N/A

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

1. Develop an individualized adoption preparation plan for the child in collaboration with a mental health provider, if applicable, resource parent, Guardian ad Litem (GAL)/Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), and the CFT;
2. Assess the child's knowledge of adoption based upon the child's age and developmental level, explain termination and the adoption process with the child, and answer any questions the child may have. Utilize the resource parent(s) and the CFT when appropriate;
3. Complete a mental health assessment by an independent provider specializing in adoption;
4. Assess the need for a therapist or counselor to help the resource parent(s) address any concerns related to the adoption of the child;

5. Refer the child and/or resource parents to a therapist or counselor that specializes in adoption, if the assessment indicates a need;
6. Provide the child with a [Lifebook](#), if they do not already have one;
7. Discuss the possibility of postadoption visitation privileges for the child with the preadoptive family and make a determination as to whether it is in the best interest of the child for such visitation to occur;
8. Assess if it is appropriate for a good-bye visit with the birth parents and/or other significant relatives, if postadoption visitation is not appropriate;
9. Assess the child's needs and prepare a [Child Social Summary](#) on the child that gives a comprehensive and balanced picture of the child; and
10. Document all assessment results in the child's case file and in the Indiana Child Welfare System (ICWIS) case log notes.

The Supervisor will:

1. Assist the FCM in ensuring that all necessary assessments are completed and documented in a timely manner;
2. Ensure that all necessary referrals are made in a timely manner; and
3. Provide guidance and recommendations regarding postadoption services to the FCM.

#### PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

#### FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Lifebook](#) – Available in Hard Copy only
2. [Tool 10.B: Child Social Summary](#)

#### RELATED INFORMATION

##### **Importance of Preparation and Assessment of the Child**

In an effort to reduce the number of adoption disruptions and dissolutions, DCS must adequately assess and prepare children for the adoption process and assist in establishing and maintaining strong support systems.

Children need to grieve the loss of the birth family, therefore the FCM should discuss termination and adoption with the child, if age and developmentally appropriate, to give the child an opportunity to openly discuss his or her feelings. The FCM should consult with the child's therapist, if applicable, to determine the best approach for such a conversation with the child. Involving the resource parent(s) and the CFT, if applicable, to help support the child's feelings of loss may also be helpful in this process.