

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 3: Hotline	Effective Date: December 1, 2021
	Section 01: Receiving Reports of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect	Version: 6

POLICY OVERVIEW

An individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) is a mandated reporter and has the duty to make a report of CA/N. Allegations of CA/N may be made through the centralized Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Child Abuse Hotline (Hotline), which is available 24 hours per day, seven (7) days per week. The reporter may reach the Hotline at the toll-free telephone number (1-800-800-5556), by email, or by fax.

Note: A person who makes a CA/N report is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be imposed because of such actions if the report is made in good faith.

PROCEDURE

All allegations of CA/N must be received by the Hotline for an intake report to be created. The Hotline will accept oral, written (hard copy), and electronic reports or requests. Calls received from a Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) that enters the provided access code will be routed to the front of the queue.

The DCS local office will assist any individual from the community who wishes to make a report in person at the DCS local office. The DCS local office will ensure that the individual has access to a telephone to make a report to the Hotline. If the caller is unable or unwilling to place the call to the Hotline, the DCS local office should take the report and subsequently call the Hotline to report the allegations.

The Hotline Intake Specialist (IS) will:

1. Record the date and time of the call;
2. Engage the caller in a courteous and professional manner;
3. Ask relevant questions to gather as much information as possible about the child, family, and allegations;
4. Actively listen to the reporter and take detailed notes; and
5. Make an initial determination as to the disposition of the call to be one (1) of the following:
 - a. Homeless Unaccompanied Minor: Proceed with completing a CA/N intake report regardless of whether abuse and/or neglect is alleged,
 - b. CA/N allegations: Proceed with creating a Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect (310). See policy 3.02 Creating a Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) Intake Report for additional information,
 - c. Professional Service Request (PSR): Proceed with creating the PSR Intake form. See policy 3.03 Professional Service Request (PSR) for additional information, or
 - d. Other action to be taken:
 - i. **LEA Requesting Immediate Assistance at the Scene:** The IS should first ask if there are any allegations of CA/N. The IS should request essential information

- from the Report Source before requesting immediate assistance from the DCS local office. At the end of the call, the IS will contact the DCS local office directly and will email notes to the DCS local office, if requested. The IS must also complete the 310 (if there are allegations of CA/N) or the Professional Service Request Intake form (if there are no allegations of CA/N) and follow the respective process as outlined in policies 3.02 Creating a Child Abuse and/or Neglect Intake Report or 3.03 Professional Service Request (PSR) Intake;
- ii. **Out-of-State CA/N allegations:** Reports in which the alleged CA/N occurred in another state will be referred to a DCS local office for final disposition as with all allegations of CA/N. The DCS local office may choose to assess the report or screen out the report. Should the DCS local office choose to screen out the report, the DCS local office will forward the CA/N information to the appropriate child welfare agency in the state where the allegations of CA/N occurred. No further action will be required by DCS unless courtesy interviews are requested by the out-of-state agency;
 - iii. **Allegations of CA/N occurring on tribal land of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in St. Joseph County:** Reports in which the alleged CA/N incident occurred on tribal land of the Pokagon Band in St. Joseph County will be referred to the DCS local office in St. Joseph County for final disposition. See Tool 2.B Disposition of CA/N Reports Involving an Indian Child of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and policy 2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). See forms and tools to view a map of the Pokagon Band's Tribal land;
 - iv. **Information only:** If the caller is requesting the phone number of a community resource or service, provide the caller with the requested information; no further action required;
 - v. **Collateral information:** If a caller would like to provide additional information for an open assessment or case, this will be documented as an Information and Referral (I&R) and forwarded to the FCM, FCM Supervisor, and the county distribution list of the open assessment or case;
 - vi. **Inquiries:** If a caller is interested in the status of a CA/N report, assessment, or case, follow the procedures outlined in policy 2.06 Sharing of Confidential Information;
 - vii. **Complaints:** Refer the caller to the appropriate person by following the chain of command, escalating only if previous complaints went unresolved;
 - viii. **Resource parenting inquiries:** Refer the caller to the Foster Care Helpline (1-888-631-9510) to be connected to a Regional Foster Care Specialist; or
 - ix. **Adoptive parenting inquiries:** Refer the caller to 1-888-25-ADOPT to be connected with an Adoption Consultant in their region.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 20-50-2-1 Application](#)
- [IC 31-33-5: Duty to Report Child Abuse or Neglect](#)
- [IC 31-33-5-1: Duty to make report](#)
- [IC 31-33-5-2: Report; notification of individual in charge of institution, school, facility, or agency](#)
- [IC 31-33-5-3: Effect of compliance on individual's own duty to report](#)
- [IC 31-33-7: Receipt of Reports of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect](#)
- [IC 31-33-18: Disclosure or Reports; Confidentiality Requirements](#)
- [IC 31-36-3: Homeless Children](#)

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Information and Referral (I&R)

An I&R is a report in which DCS is provided with information by the caller regarding an open case or assessment or the caller is requesting general information (e.g., Community Partners, Food Banks, and Mental Health Providers). However, the report will likely not meet the statutory definition of CA/N.

Mandated Reporter

A mandated reporter is any person who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of CA/N. All mandated reporters must report the incident to the Hotline.

Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians

The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians is a federally recognized tribe with headquarters in Michigan. The Pokagon Band maintains Tribal/Sovereign land in South Bend, Indiana within St. Joseph County, which is under jurisdiction of the Pokagon Tribe.

Professional Reporters

Professional reporters, as defined by Indiana law, are members of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency. These reporters are legally obligated to report the alleged CA/N to DCS first, and then to the person in charge of the organization for which they work or volunteer.

Professional Service Request

A Professional Service Request is a request from a designated professional such as LEA, the court, or a prosecutor where there is no allegation of CA/N, including a request for information from an out-of-state child service agency. A professional service request will not be an assessment.

Forms and Tools

- [Child Welfare Information System](#)
- DCS Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-800-5556
- [DCS Child Abuse Hotline Email](#)
- DCS Child Abuse Hotline Fax – 317-234-7596 or 317-234-7595
- [Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Tribal Lands Map](#)
- [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF114\) \(310\)](#)
- Professional Service Request Intake – Available in the case management system
- [Tool 2.B: Disposition of CA/N Reports Involving and Indian Child of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians](#)

Related Policies

- [2.06 Sharing of Confidential Information](#)
- [2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#)
- [3.02 Creating a Child Abuse and/or Neglect \(CA/N\) Intake Report](#)
- [3.03 Professional Service Request \(PSR\)](#)