

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 4: Assessment Section 09: Interviewing Children	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 11

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) must respond quickly and carefully to reports of child abuse or neglect (CA/N) to keep children safe. Interviewing the child helps to gather important information that will help with making an accurate decision about what happened.

POLICY STATEMENT

Before talking with a child, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will ask the child's parent, guardian, or custodian for permission (see policy [4.05](#)). If there is an emergency, DCS may still talk with a child and make sure they are safe. If permission is not obtained before talking with the child (see policy [4.06](#)).

DCS will talk in person with:

1. The child who may have been abused or neglected;
2. All other children living in the home (including children who live part-time in the home due to custody or visitation arrangements); and
3. Any child who does not live in the home but was there at the time of the alleged incident.

Note: For a very young child or a child that is unable to talk, an interview will consist of face-to-face contact at a level suitable to the child's age and/or developmental level.

A trained forensic interviewer may conduct the interview if the child is an alleged victim of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, human trafficking, or other conditions that could lead to criminal charges being filed. This interview may be conducted at a child advocacy center (CAC) with DCS in attendance.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 5-26.5-1-3: "Domestic violence"](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-14.2: "Child advocacy center"](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-47.1: "Forensic interview"](#)
- [IC 31-25-2-14.5: Child advocacy centers; duties; confidentiality; civil immunity](#)
- [IC 31-33-18-2: Disclosure of unredacted material to certain persons](#)
- [IC 31-34-13: Chapter 13. Child Videotape Testimony in Child in Need of Services Proceedings](#)
- [IC 35-42-3.5: Chapter 3.5. Human and Sexual Trafficking](#)