



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 4: Assessment

Section 04: Required Interviews

Effective Date: August 1, 2025

Version: 6

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POLICY OVERVIEW

Interviews are required for certain individuals during an assessment of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) to gain the necessary information to assess child safety.

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PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will conduct the following interviews for all assessments:

1. An in-person interview with all alleged child victims (see policy 4.09 Interviewing Children);

Note: For children who are too young or unable to communicate, an interview will consist of face-to-face interaction with the child at a level that is appropriate given the child's developmental status.

2. An in-person interview with all other children living in the home and any other children present in the home at the time of the alleged incident;
3. An in-person interview with one (1) or both parents, guardians, or custodians, including each noncustodial parent. The interviews will take place on the same day the interview takes place with the alleged child victim, unless an interview on the same day is not possible (see policy 4.10 Interviewing the Parent, Guardian, or Custodian);

Exception: If the parent, guardian, or custodian is incarcerated or resides out of state, phone calls or virtual meetings may be considered, if available.

4. An in-person interview with the alleged perpetrator (see policy 4.11 Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator);

Exception: DCS will not interview the alleged perpetrator when certain conditions apply.

5. An in-person or phone interview with the report source (unless the report source is anonymous);
6. An in-person or phone interview with every person who is known to have witnessed the incident; and
7. An in-person or phone interview with individuals who may be able to provide additional information which adds value to the assessment by helping assess the child's safety, mitigate risks, and make an assessment finding. The FCM may obtain records (e.g.,

school, law enforcement, or medical) if the individual is inaccessible. The need for additional interviews should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Exception: Specific interview types are addressed in separate policies. See policies 4.09 Interviewing Children, 4.10 Interviewing the Parent, Guardian, or Custodian, and 4.11 Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator.

Once the interviews are completed, the FCM will:

1. Document each interview in the case management system; and

Note: If the required interview could not be completed, the FCM must document the reason in the case management system.

2. Staff the results of each interview, all attempted interviews, and child safety with the FCM Supervisor, as needed.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Provide assistance to the FCM regarding the required interviews, as needed, and help determine if additional interviews should be completed; and
2. Assist the FCM with identifying when and where to interview the child and/or non-offending parent when domestic violence (DV) is suspected (see policy 2.30 Domestic Violence [DV]).

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

N/A

Forms and Tools

- [Assessment Staffing Guide \(SF 56567\)](#)

Related Policies

- [2.30 Domestic Violence \(DV\)](#)
- [4.09 Interviewing Children](#)
- [4.10 Interviewing the Parent, Guardian or Custodian](#)
- [4.11 Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-33-8-7: Scope of assessment by department of child services; order for access to home, school, or other place, or for mental or physical examinations; petition to interview child; order; requirements](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 4.04

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Contact versus Interview

A contact can be any communication or an in-person observation. An interview occurs when a person is individually questioned about the allegations of a CA/N report. Best practice is that children are not interviewed in the presence of family members or other witnesses. A contact is not always considered an interview.

A contact includes, but is not limited to the following types of communication:

1. Face-to-face at the home, office, or other location;
2. Telephone;
3. Fax;
4. Email;
5. Voicemail;
6. Written correspondence; and/or
7. Virtual (e.g., video conferencing).

Observing All Homes of the Child

If a child spends time in multiple homes, it is best to visit every home the child goes to regularly, including the home of any parent, guardian, or custodian of that child. This will allow an observation of safe sleep practices, utilities, home conditions, occupants, and food (see the Assessment Staffing Guide [ASG]).

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