

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 4: Assessment (Investigation)	Effective Date: July 1, 2007
	Section 13: Assessing Home Conditions	Version: 1

POLICY	OLD POLICY: 205.44
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- **[POLICY CHANGE]** The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will conduct an assessment of the home of an alleged child victim **if**:
 - the alleged child abuse/neglect (CA/N) **occurred in the child's home**; or
 - **[NEW]** during the course of the assessment (investigation), **concerns** about the **condition of the home** and its impact **on child safety and well-being** arise.
- DCS will assess the home to determine if any conditions exist that support the allegations and/or raise additional concerns about the safety and well-being of the alleged child victim and any other children living in the home.
- A visit/visits to the home to conduct an assessment may be announced or unannounced.
- DCS will seek a court order and assistance from law enforcement authority (LEA) when it is necessary to conduct an assessment of a home if access is denied.

See separate policy, [Monitoring Family Progress](#) for information relating to assessment (investigation) of the home during On-Going Services.

Code References

- N/A

PROCEDURE

The FCM will:

- Make a determination about whether to arrive announced or unannounced to conduct an assessment of the home.
- Consider any risks associated with visiting the home relating to the safety of the FCM and the child.
- Seek permission to enter from an adult in the home. If permission is denied, seek a court order and assistance from LEA to gain entry. See separate policy, [Entry into Home or Facility](#).
- Exit the home immediately and without alarming the persons inside if at any time the FCM suspects the home may contain a meth lab. See [Indiana Drug Endangered Child Response Protocol](#).
- Discontinue the interview if at any point the FCM becomes concerned for his/her safety (e.g. - persons in the home become hostile or threatening or there are other dangerous conditions in the home). Seek Supervisory input to make alternate arrangements to complete the assessment (investigation).
- Examine every room of the home, paying particular attention to areas where the child may eat, sleep, play and bathe.
- Examine the kitchen (refrigerator, cabinets, pantry, etc.) to verify adequate food supply.

- Document the conditions of the home in writing; photograph any adverse conditions.
- Add new allegations to the assessment (investigation) report if applicable due to information gained during the assessment (investigation) of the home environment.
- If applicable, complete an emergency removal of the child from the home if conditions are found that warrant such action; see separate policy [Involuntary Removals](#) for further details.

RELATED INFORMATION

General

The purpose of the assessment of the home is to assess (investigate) and evaluate conditions in the home that relate to child health and safety and/or assist in making a finding regarding the allegations.

Unannounced Visits for Assessments (Investigations)

The FCM must decide whether or not to announce the visit for the home assessment (investigation) based on the nature of the allegations and the need to protect the child.

See related policy, [Entry into Home or Facility](#)

FORMS AND TOOLS

- N/A