



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES  
CHILD WELFARE MANUAL

Chapter 4: Assessment (Investigation)

Effective Date: July 2, 2007

Section 26: Determining Service Levels and  
Transitioning to Ongoing Services

Version: 1

POLICY

OLD POLICY: Safety/Risk/Strengths/Needs Manual

- [REVISED] The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will intervene in the lives of children and families at the least intrusive level possible, given the assessment (investigation) findings and circumstances of each case.
- [NEW] DCS will make a determination about the family's initial service needs and offer services as early in the assessment (investigation) as possible in order to assure child safety and well-being.
- [NEW] The assessing (investigating) Family Case Manager (FCM) will continue to monitor the safety and well-being of the child until the case is formally transferred to another (FCM) via a transition meeting.

Code References

- N/A

PROCEDURE

The FCM will complete the following after determining the family's risk level and needs level:

1. Examine the **Service Level Matrix (see Practice Guidance)** for direction on the appropriate **service level** to offer the child and family.
2. Examine the **Service Type Matrix (see Practice Guidance)** for direction on the appropriate **type of services** to offer the child and family.
3. Use critical thinking and evaluate the appropriateness of the level and type of services indicated by the matrices and arrive at a recommendation.
4. Consult with his/her supervisor.
5. With supervisory approval, implement any services necessary to assure the child's safety and well-being. (See separate policies, Family Preservation Services, Family Support Services, and Rehabilitative Services.)
6. [NEW] Continue to monitor the safety and well-being of the child through regular contact and:
  - a. Begin the transition to ongoing services by requesting that a case be created. See separate policy, Transitioning from Assessment (Investigation); **or**
  - b. Participate in an internal transition meeting where the responsibility for monitoring the child's safety and well-being will be formally transferred to a separate ongoing services FCM. See separate policy, Transitioning from Assessment (Investigation).

The Supervisor will:

1. Review and approve the FCM's recommendations regarding the level and type of services .

## RELATED INFORMATION

### Determining Service Level

By examining the risk level in the context of the needs level, a determination can be made about the level of services that is appropriate for the child and family.

Service Level Matrix		RISK LEVEL			
		LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
NEEDS LEVEL	HIGH	Moderate	High	Very High	Very High
	MODERATE	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
	LOW	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

### Determining Service Type

After the **service level** has been calculated, the FCM considers the appropriate **service type**:

Service Type Matrix		Appropriate Service Type			
		No Services / Referral for Services (non DCS-monitored)	Service Referral Agreement (SRA)	Informal Adjustment	Child in Need of Services (in /out-of-home?)
Service Level	(1) Low	✓	✓		
	(2) Moderate			✓	
	(3) High			✓	✓
	(4) Very High			✓	✓

- **No services needed:** Children are assessed as safe. There is no (or extremely low) risk to the child and the family is able to manage any risk issues using its own strengths and resources.
- **Referral for community-based services:** There is low risk to the child but the family is not able to manage risk issues using its own strengths and resources. However, the family is able to use community resources for support without ongoing DCS case management services. DCS involvement is limited to actively linking the family with those services and resources that effectively and safely address its needs.
- **Service Referral Agreement (SRA):** There is low- to moderate risk to the child and the family is not able or may be unwilling to manage risk issues without continued involvement of DCS. The family participates in the development of the SRA and must complete all services outlined in the agreement. Consequences for not complying include, but are not limited to, entry of the perpetrator into the State Central Registry (SCR) and possible court intervention, such as filing a CHINS petition.
- **Informal Adjustment (IA):** An IA may be appropriate for children in families where risk levels range from moderate to very high, but coercive intervention of the courts is not needed. DCS will work with the family to develop the terms of the IA, monitor participation in services and regularly evaluate the child's safety. The courts must approve the IA. Consequences for not complying may include, but are not limited to, court intervention, such as filing a CHINS petition.

- **Child in need of services (CHINS):** DCS may file a CHINS petition (highest level of intervention) for children in families where the risk level is high or very high and coercive intervention of the court is needed to assure the child's safety and well-being. The child may stay in the home or be placed in substitute care. The court monitors the case, including the case plan and permanency goal. Consequences for not complying may include, but are not limited to, a placement in out-of-home care, and in the most extreme circumstances, termination of parental rights.

#### FORMS AND TOOLS

- N/A

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