



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 4: Assessment

Section 28: Removals from Parents, Guardians, or Custodians

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POLICY OVERVIEW

Removal of a child from the child's parent, guardian, or custodian may be necessary to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

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PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) **shall request a court order** to remove a child from the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or, **on an emergency basis**, remove without a court order when the child's physical or mental condition will be seriously impaired or seriously endangered if the child is not immediately taken into custody.

Note: An assessment involving domestic violence does not always warrant an automatic removal to ensure the safety of the child (see policy 2.30 Domestic Violence).

A Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting may be held when it has been determined the child is at imminent risk of removal (see policy 5.07 Child and Family Team [CFT] Meetings).

The DCS local office will neither delay nor deny placement of the child in an available resource home based on the race, color, or national origin of the child or resource parent when a child who is believed to be a foreign national or an Indian child is removed due to an immediate safety concern.

When it is determined an involuntary removal of a child is necessary, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Obtain supervisory approval prior to removal of any child from their parent, guardian, or custodian;
2. Ask the parent, guardian, or custodian if they need a reasonable accommodation due to a disability. If there are any barriers to communication with the parent, guardian, or custodian, or a reasonable accommodation is requested, take necessary action to make appropriate, reasonable accommodations;
3. Obtain a court order authorizing the removal unless emergency removal is necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the child;

Note: In an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) or potential ICWA case, the emergency removal only exists if a child alleged to be an Indian child is in imminent physical danger. See policy 2.12 Administration of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) for additional

information and the Guidelines for Implementing the Indian Child Welfare Act for additional information.

4. Request Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) presence at the removal. DCS will not remove a child without LEA present, unless:
 - a. Emergency removal is necessary; and
 - b. LEA has been contacted but is unable to be present during the removal and there is an immediate concern for the safety or well-being of the child.

Note: If DCS removes a child without a court order and/or LEA present, DCS will document in the case management system the reasons why such measures were necessary.

5. Obtain information about the child in order to make the transition for the child as easy and as safe as possible. Information may include, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Medical information (diagnoses, allergies, current prescription medications, dietary restrictions),
 - b. Favorite toy/item,
 - c. Favorite hobby/activity,
 - d. Education information, and
 - e. Social/behavioral information.
6. Prepare the child for removal. See policy 8.08 Preparing Child for Placement for additional information;
7. Complete the Consulate/Embassy Notification immediately when a foreign or a child with dual nationality is detained or a foreign nationality is identified, whichever comes first, and send to the International and Cultural Affairs (ICA) liaison. See policy 2.22 International and Cultural Affairs Services for more information;

Note: A Consulate/Embassy Notification must be completed for each child. A copy of any case documents (e.g., court orders, identification documents, and paternity orders) and any additional contact information should be attached when the Consulate/Embassy Notification is submitted.

8. Complete a referral for ICA services if ICA needs are identified;
9. Complete the following if the child is believed to be an Indian child
 - a. Ask the question, "Is this an Indian child"?,
 - b. Complete the Indian Status Identification and genogram with the family, and
 - c. Forward the completed documents to the DCS Staff Attorney.

Note: In ICWA cases, the DCS Staff Attorney will utilize the information from the Indian Status Identification and genogram to complete the ICWA notifications to the parent, Indian custodian, and/or Indian tribe in accordance with ICWA Guidelines.

10. Provide the child's parent, guardian, or custodian, including an alleged father or any known noncustodial parent the Advisement of Legal Rights Upon Taking Custody of/Filing a Petition on Behalf of a Child Alleged to be a Child in Need of Services at the time of removal, or notify the parent, guardian, or custodian within two (2) hours of the child's detention, and provide the parent, guardian, or custodian with the Advisement of Legal Rights Upon Taking a Custody of/Filing a Petition on Behalf of a Child Alleged to be a Child in Need of Services if they were not present at the time of removal.

Note: If the parent is a minor, provide the Advisement of Legal Rights Upon Taking Custody of/Filing a Petition on Behalf of a Child Alleged to be a Child in Need of Services to the minor parent and the minor parent's parent, guardian, or the custodian.

11. Complete the Taking Custody of a Child Without a Verbal or Written Court Order: Description of Circumstances to document why the child was removed without a court order and/or without LEA presence if such extreme measures were taken;
12. Complete a diligent search to identify all adult relatives and consider completing a DCS Investigator referral for assistance in situations where all procedural steps have been completed but efforts have been unsuccessful in locating individuals. See policy 5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants for additional guidance;
13. Complete and send the Notice to Relatives to the following adult relatives within 30 days of a child being removed from his or her parent, guardian, or custodian:
 - a. Paternal and maternal grandparents,
 - b. Aunts and uncles,
 - c. Siblings of the child involved (see Relevant Information for the definition of a sibling),
 - d. Parent of a child's sibling if the parent has legal custody of the sibling, and
 - e. Any other relatives suggested by the child or parent.
14. Consider the suitability of noncustodial parents, relatives, and former foster parents when securing appropriate placement for the child. See policies 8.01 Selecting a Placement Option and 8.09 Placing a Child in Out-of-Home Care for additional information;

Note: Ask if the noncustodial parent, relative, and/or former foster parent needs a reasonable accommodation due to a disability.

15. Notify the child's school of the child's removal as soon as the child is safely placed to ensure the school is aware of any safety measures and/or medical interventions needed;
16. Complete a referral to the Education Services Team within 24 hours to request the School Notification and Best Interest Determination (BID) be submitted to the child's school. See policies 8.20 Educational Services and 8.22 School Notifications and Legal Settlement for additional information;
17. Notify the DCS Central Eligibility Unit (CEU) when a child receiving benefits from the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) or the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) is removed from the home;
18. Complete the Preliminary Inquiry (PI) and submit it to the FCM Supervisor for review;
19. Consult with the DCS Staff Attorney to finalize the PI for submission to the court and request a Detention Hearing be scheduled to occur within 48 hours of detention of the child, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays;
20. Provide the parent, guardian, or custodian with advance written notification of the Detention Hearing using the Notice of Hearing. Also, see notification responsibilities for ICWA in policy 2.12 Administration of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA);
21. Complete the DCS Child Support Worksheet Questionnaire Form in consultation with the parent, guardian, or custodian and submit it to the DCS Staff Attorney. See policy 2.20 Establishment of Child Support Orders;
22. Gather the information necessary to determine eligibility for federal funding when a child is removed from the home. See Chapter 15 Eligibility for additional guidance;

23. Complete a Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment. See policy 5.19 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment for additional information;
24. Document the child's health records in the medical passport and/or electronically in the case management system in the "Health Information" card on the child's person page (see policy 8.27 Maintaining Health Records – Medical Passport); and
25. Ensure all information and actions taken are documented in the case management system.

Note: If a child is removed from the home for more than 24 hours, the case needs to be entered in the case management system, as required by Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Staff with the FCM and provide supervisory approval for removal of a child when it has been determined the child cannot safely remain in the home;
2. Assist the FCM with any removal activities; and
3. Review the PI prior to the DCS Staff Attorney screening the PI and CHINS petition.

The DCS Staff Attorney will:

1. Staff with the FCM and FCM Supervisor, as needed, regarding the involuntary removal;
2. Review the PI prior to securing a Detention Hearing;
3. Email or fax the Consulate/Embassy Notification to the ICA liaison, if applicable;
4. Provide the ICWA notification to the child's parent, Indian custodian, and/or Indian tribe within the mandated timeframe, and obtain confirmation of child's eligibility (or non-eligibility) for membership in a U.S. Federally Recognized tribe, if applicable;
5. File a request for authorization to file a CHINS petition;
6. Prepare a CHINS petition and file upon receipt of authorization to file from the court;
7. Ensure a motion is filed timely for a detention hearing. See policy 6.01 Detention/Initial Hearing for additional information; and
8. Ensure required language regarding Contrary to the Welfare/Best Interests of the child (CW/BI), Reasonable Efforts (RE) to Prevent Removal, and Placement and Care Responsibility (PC) to DCS or Active Efforts for ICWA cases is included in the Detention/Initial court order.

The ICA Liaison will:

1. Send the Consulate/Embassy Notification to the appropriate consulate or embassy of the child's country of origin, if applicable; and
2. Serve as the liaison for DCS and each respective consulate or embassy in sharing information as allowed by law. See policy 2.22 International and Cultural Affairs Services for additional information.

The Education Services Team will complete the School Notification and Best Interest Determination (BID) form and submit it to the appropriate school personnel.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Alleged Father

An alleged father is any man claiming to be or charged with being a child's biological father who has not yet been established as the child's legal father.

Foreign National

A foreign national is any person (adult or child) who is born outside of the U.S. and has not become a U.S. citizen.

Medically Fragile

A child who has a medically diagnosed immunocompromised condition (chronic or acute) or dependence on specialized care or equipment for life or health sustaining function. Conditions that may qualify a child as medically fragile may include cancer, transplant care, and cystic fibrosis.

Noncustodial Parent

A noncustodial parent is a person who does not have physical custody of the child.

Parent

A parent, as defined by 31-9-2-88, is a biological or an adoptive parent. The term refers to both parents, regardless of the marital status. A parent includes an alleged father.

Sibling

A sibling is defined as:

1. A brother or sister by blood or adoption, half-sibling by blood or adoption, or step-sibling; and
2. Any other individual who would be considered a sibling if parental rights had not been terminated.

Forms and Tools

- [Taking Custody of a Child Without a Verbal or Written Court Order: Description of Circumstances \(SF 49584\)](#)
- [Advisement of Legal Rights Upon Taking a Custody of/Filing a Petition on Behalf of a Child Alleged to be a Child in Need of Services \(SF 47114\)](#)
- Notice of Hearing – Available in the case in the case management system
- [Notice to Relatives \(SF 55211\)](#)
- [Consulate/Embassy Notification \(SF 55676\)](#)
- [DCS Child Support Worksheet Questionnaire Form](#)
- [Title IV-E and Title IV-A/EA Information \(SF 55435\)](#)
- Preliminary Inquiry (PI) – Available in the case management system
- [Indian Status Identification \(SF 55407\)](#)

Related Policies

- [2.12 Administration of the Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#)
- [2.20 Establishment of Child Support Orders](#)
- [2.22 International and Cultural Affairs Services](#)
- [2.30 Domestic Violence](#)
- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)

- [5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants](#)
- [6.01 Detention/Initial Hearing](#)
- [8.01 Selecting a Placement Option](#)
- [8.08 Preparing a Child for Placement](#)
- [8.20 Educational Services](#)
- [8.22 School Notifications and Legal Settlement](#)
- [8.27 Maintaining Health Records – Medical Passport](#)
- [Chapter 15 Eligibility](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-28-0.5: Electronic Records](#)
- [IC 31-33-8-8: Order for child's immediate removal](#)
- [IC 31-32-3-10.5: Definitions; waiting lists](#)
- [IC 31-34-2-3: Taking a child into custody without court order; documentation](#)
- [IC 31-34-2-6: Documentation by person taking child into custody without court order; forms](#)
- [IC 31-34-4: Temporary Placement of Child Taken into Custody](#)
- [IC 31-34-3-4.5: Notice of removal of child](#)
- [IC 31-34-3-4.7: Notice to School of Child Taken into Custody](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-107\(b\): "Relative"](#)
- [IC 34-30-2-134: Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-88: "Parent"](#)
- [IC 31-10-2-1: Policy and purpose](#)
- [IC 31-27-4-6.5: "Disability"; foster family home](#)
- [42 USC 12102: Definition of disability](#)
- [42 USC 671 \(a\)\(29\): Notification of Parents of Siblings](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 4.28

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.

CFT Process During Assessment Phase

The CFT composition may look different in the assessment phase. Over time, the functioning of the team may change, and other team members may be identified. CFT members may aid in identifying the least restrictive and most appropriate placement option by providing information about noncustodial parents, absent parents, and/or appropriate relatives, as well as, discussing priorities such as proximity and placement of siblings, if applicable.

The following should be considered when developing the CFT during the assessment phase:

1. **A lengthy prep is not necessarily required when utilizing the CFT process during the assessment phase.** During the assessment phase, FCMs are gathering the same information that is covered during the “prep” for the CFT process. It is important to realize that the CFT process utilizes all the basic Teaming, Engaging, Assessing, Planning, and Intervening (TEAPI) skills that each FCM has learned.
2. **Some families may identify a limited support system during the assessment phase.** As a result of a limited support system, there may only be two (2) to three (3) individuals at the meeting in addition to the representatives from DCS. In these situations, DCS may engage and team with the family to identify a goal of expanding their informal support system, which would increase the CFT’s membership. The key is to have a CFT composed of key individuals that may support the family after DCS involvement ends. DCS should always ask the question, “Is this an Indian Child?”
3. **The format of the CFT may look different in the assessment phase.** These meetings may lack the formality of the CFT meetings held later in the case. The focus of the meeting will be the same: the creation of a functioning CFT that may support the family so that well-informed decisions may be made to ensure the safety and well-being of the child involved.

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