

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management	Effective Date: May 1, 2008
	Section 6: Locating Absent Parents	Version: 1

POLICY	OLD POLICY: 703.224
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make diligent efforts beginning in the assessment phase of the case to locate absent parents of children under DCS care and custody.

When the identity and whereabouts of a parent of a child under DCS care and custody is unknown, DCS will attempt to identify and provide notification to the parent of the Court proceedings using various means such as the Putative Father Registry and Parent Locator.

When the whereabouts of a parent of a child under DCS care and custody is unknown, DCS will complete an Affidavit of Diligent Inquiry (ADI) to document for the Court the efforts to locate the child's parent and provide notice of Court proceedings.

Code References

1. [IC 31-34-3-2 Procedures for notice; custodial parent, guardian, or custodian who cannot be located](#)

PROCEDURE

When the identity and whereabouts of a parent of a child under DCS care and custody is unknown, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Gather the following information about the absent parent from the parent/guardian/custodian during the assessment process and throughout the life of the case, if necessary:
 - a. Full name of both parents and any known aliases;
 - b. Social security number for both parents;
 - c. Date of birth for both parents;
 - d. Previous address and/or telephone number;
 - e. Present or previous employers;
 - f. Address and telephone number of any known relatives; and
 - g. Any benefits received (e.g., disability, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), etc.).

2. Make other efforts to identify the absent parent as necessary:
 - a. Ensure a letter is sent to the Department of Health requesting a search of the Putative Father Registry;
 - b. Utilize the Family Network Diagram and present to the court;
 - c. At the first court hearing, request the judge to put the custodial parent or other individuals under oath to answer questions regarding the noncustodial parent and extended family;

- d. Obtain/review a copy of the birth certificates of the child(ren) to ascertain date of birth and the names of parents listed;
- e. Inquire as to persons who were present at the time of the child's birth;
- f. Ask the child, if age-appropriate, about the absent parent or extended family;
- g. Inquire as to who is listed as the emergency contact at school or with a medical provider;
- h. Review the child's health records for names of parents; and
- i. Request service providers to assist DCS in obtaining information about the absent parent.

When the identity of a parent of a child under DCS care and custody is known but the whereabouts are unknown, the following are considered diligent efforts to locate the parent:

1. Check TANF, ICWIS, ICES or other government information;
2. Search worldwide military locator, if applicable;

Note: There may be a fee associated with this service.

3. Search databases related to career or hobbies;
4. Check the telephone directory;
5. Inquire with the county jail and the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC). See the IDOC Offender Locator Service at: <http://www.in.gov/apps/indcorrection/ofs/>;
6. Search other state offender locator services as available;
7. Attempt to contact the absent parent at their last known address; and
8. Attempt to make contact with other individuals (e.g., extended custodial family) who may assist in locating the absent parent.

The FCM will also:

1. Document all efforts and the results of the search into Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) contact log;
2. Advise the Child and Family Team (CFT) regarding the identity, or lack thereof, of the noncustodial parent and efforts to locate;
3. Complete/provide an ADI during the assessment phase outlining the efforts taken to identify/locate the absent parent to the local DCS attorney to ensure that Notice of proceedings is published as to the absent parent; and
4. Continue to pursue these efforts if necessary throughout the life of the case.

Note: When the identity and location of the noncustodial/alleged parent is known, the FCM will provide the address of the parent to the local DCS attorney so the parent may receive notices of Court proceedings.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

1. N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Family Network Diagram Guide](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Importance of Conducting a Diligent Search for Absent Parents

Failure to complete a diligent search for the absent parent may delay appropriate permanency options for the child(ren) under the care and custody of DCS. It is necessary to demonstrate to the court that a diligent search has been made to locate an absent parent before a court can involuntarily terminate that person's parental rights.

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