



DCS Practice SOP In-Home Services

7.09: Travel	Related Policy: N/A
Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 1

Roles

- Family Case Manager (FCM)
- FCM Supervisor
- Division Manager (DM)
- Local Office Director (LOD)
- Regional (RD)/Assistant Regional Director (ARD)
- DCS Staff Attorney

Procedure

Travel, vacations, and other activities away from home help children have normal childhood experiences.

Extended-Stay Travel

To keep children safe, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) requires notification and/or approval of travel plans for all travel, lasting **over 72 hours**, including:

1. Emergency travel;
2. In-state travel;
3. Out-of-state travel;
4. Out-of-country travel; and
5. Blanket travel.

DCS will follow local court protocol if a court order or hearing is needed for travel. Check with the DCS Staff Attorney to see if court approval is needed.

Note: If a child is on juvenile or adult probation, there may be additional travel requirements for that child.

Emergency Travel

In an emergency requiring out-of-state extended-stay travel, contact the FCM or, if they are unavailable, contact the FCM Supervisor, DM or LOD.

When the local DCS office is closed (e.g., holidays, evenings, weekends) or the FCM is unable to be reached, contact the DCS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Hotline) by phone (1-800-800-5556) or email (DCSHotlineReports@dcs.in.gov) to report the emergency travel.

Once the Information & Referral (I&R) is generated from the Hotline and sent to the DCS local office, the FCM Supervisor will:

1. Contact the parent, guardian, or custodian to provide support and get details, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Purpose of travel,
 - b. Transportation and lodging information (e.g., vehicle license plate number, flight information, hotel, other accommodations),
 - c. Child's current location and/or planned destination,

- d. Contact information for the adults with the child, and
 - e. Expected date of the child's return.
2. Document the travel information in the case management system; and
 3. Tell the DCS Staff Attorney.

The next business day after the child's expected return, the FCM will:

1. Verify with the parent, guardian, or custodian the child has returned;
2. Help reschedule any missed service provider appointments for the child and family;
3. Document all travel details in the case management system; and
4. Tell the DCS Staff Attorney the child has returned.

DCS Staff Attorney will notify the court of the emergency travel, if required.

Refer to the Emergency Operations Plan (see Resources) for instructions about ensuring the safety and security for children under DCS custody during an emergency or disaster.

Travel for In-Home CHINS

In-State Travel: DCS notification at least **seven (7) business days** in advance, unless it is a recurring visit with the non-custodial parent.

Out-of-State Travel:

1. DCS notification at least **seven (7) business days** in advance; and
2. Written approval from the LOD or designee unless the travel is a recurring visit with the non-custodial parent.

Out-of-Country Travel:

1. DCS notification at least **six (6) weeks** in advance; and
2. Written approval from the RD.

The FCM will:

1. Discuss upcoming travel during monthly visits;

Note: Support the family in getting documentation for a passport, if needed. Passport requirements are available on the U.S. Department of State-Bureau of Consular Affairs website (see Resources).

2. Inform the parent, guardian, or custodian to keep the FCM updated on upcoming travel during their monthly visit, via phone (voicemail messages are acceptable) or email;
3. Collect travel details:
 - a. Purpose of travel (e.g., vacation, field trip, summer camp),
 - b. Dates of travel,
 - c. Destination,
 - d. Lodging information, including name, address, and telephone number,
 - e. Transportation information (e.g., vehicle license plate number, name of airline, flight number), and
 - f. Name and contact information for the adults who will be with the child.
4. Discuss any need to reschedule service provider appointments and/or visitation due to travel (see References);

5. Submit out-of-state extended-stay travel requests to the FCM Supervisor and LOD or designee for approval;
6. Submit out-of-country travel requests to the FCM Supervisor and LOD or designee for initial consideration;
7. Coordinate with the DCS Staff Attorney to request court approval, if required;
8. Notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of the travel decision for any out-of-state or out-of-country travel;

Note: If the travel request is approved, provide it to the parent, guardian, or custodian.

9. Document all travel details, including approvals and notifications to all parties, in the case management system; and
10. Verify the child has returned from the travel.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Discuss the safety and well-being needs of the child during the requested travel with the FCM;
2. Review all out-of-state extended-stay travel requests and out-of-country travel requests for initial consideration, and
3. Ensure the travel request to the court is completed, if required.

The LOD or designee will:

1. Approve or deny all out-of-state extended-stay travel requests based on the safety and well-being of the child;
2. Notify the FCM and FCM Supervisor of the final decision within **three (3) business days** and provide written approval, if approved;
2. Review all out-of-country travel requests for initial consideration and forward to the RD for final approval.

The RD/ARD will:

1. Approve or deny all out-of-country travel requests based on the safety and well-being of the child; and
2. Notify the FCM and DCS local office management staff of the final decision within **three (3) business days** and provide written approval for the out-of-country travel, if approved.

DCS Staff Attorney will notify the Court of the travel request, if required.

Blanket Travel Requests

The LOD may approve “blanket” travel requests, when applicable, for frequent in-state or out-of-state extended-stay travel. Written requests should include:

1. Child’s name;
2. Contact information for each adult who will be with the child;
3. Destination; and
4. Reason for frequent travel.

Travel for IA

The FCM will discuss any upcoming travel during monthly visits

Note: Travel plans will abide by the terms of the IA, including travel approvals and/or restrictions.

Definitions

- [Foreign National](#)

Resources

- DCS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556
- [DCS Emergency Operations Plan](#)
- Focused Needs/International and Cultural Affairs (ICA) Referral - available in KidTraks
- ICA email - internationalandculturalaffairs@dcf.in.gov
- [U.S. Department of State-Bureau of Consular Affairs](#)

Additional Information

- [Considerations for a Foreign-Born Child](#)

References

- [Practice SOP 7.04 Parental Interaction and Involvement \(In-Home Services\)](#)