

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES</b> <b>CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services <b>Section 16:</b> Resource Parent's Role	
	<b>Effective Date:</b> April 1, 2025	<b>Version:</b> 8

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## POLICY OVERVIEW

Foster care (see Definitions) provides a safe, nurturing, stable, and temporary environment for children who can no longer remain in their own homes due to the risk of child abuse and/or neglect (CA/N). The role of the resource parent (see Definitions) is to provide care and supervision on a 24-hour basis for a child who is a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) or under a juvenile court order. Additionally, the resource parent's role is to support the child's positive identification and strengthen relationships with the child's family of origin.

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## PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will require the resource parent to:

1. Provide a positive, safe, and nurturing environment for the child, which allows the child to express feelings about the situation (e.g., feelings regarding the initial separation, abuse or neglect suffered, reunification [if applicable], and visitation);
2. Participate in planning through Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings and/or Case Conferences, and supporting Case Plan goals, including any Concurrent Plan (see policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings, 5.08 Developing the Case Plan, and 5.15 Concurrent Planning);
3. Provide for the child's basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, and shelter) (see policy 16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care);
4. Maintain confidentiality, as outlined in the Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement form, when sharing information regarding the child and the child's family;
5. Contact the following immediately if a child in care is missing or runs away:
  - a. The local Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) in the area the child went missing, and
  - b. The DCS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Hotline) (1-800-800-5556 or [DCSHotlineReports@dcsc.in.gov](mailto:DCSHotlineReports@dcsc.in.gov)).

**Note:** The Hotline will complete an Information and Referral (I&R) then send the I&R to the local DCS office to ensure the Family Case Manager (FCM) Supervisor enters the child's information in the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) within 24 hours (see policy 5.22 Missing and Runaway Children).

6. Maintain a neutral attitude when discussing visitation with the child or other interactions between the child and the child's parent, guardian, or custodian;
7. Encourage and support the maximum amount of interaction between the parent, guardian, or custodian and the child, with consideration given to:

- a. The child's comfort level;
  - b. Safety concerns;
  - c. The needs of the child; and
  - d. The court's current visitation order and any other applicable court order.
8. Refrain from speaking negatively about any member of the child's family or other persons with whom the child has a significant relationship;
  9. Ensure the child receives appropriate routine health care (see policy 8.29 Routine Health Care);
  10. Keep the child's Medical Passport current with the child's most recent health care information and/or ensure the FCM has access to the electronic medical records maintained by the child's health care provider (see policy 8.27 Maintaining Health Records – Medical Passport);
  11. Participate in court hearings, as appropriate, and encourage all youth 14 years of age and older to attend scheduled court hearings (see policy 6.14 Children Attending Court Proceedings);

**Note:** The resource parent may provide information to the court about the child in care verbally and/or written using the Indiana Relative/Kinship/Foster Placement Reporting Form or another format.

12. Use the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (see Definitions) when determining whether a child should participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities;
13. Ensure the child has an opportunity to complete a Lifebook;
14. Complete the Resource Parent Travel Request form for all non-emergency travel requests for a child and return the form to the FCM within the timeframes specified in policy 8.24 Travel and Overnight Stays While in Out-of-Home Care;
15. Provide notification to DCS when there is a change in household members (see policies 12.12 Foster Family Home Capacity and 13.09 Conducting Background Checks for Foster Family Home Licensing).

**Note:** A foster family home (FFH) may not provide overnight or regular and continuous care and supervision to a child who is the subject of a power of attorney while providing care to a child placed in the home by DCS or probation without an exception.

Regarding the resource parent's role, the FCM will:

1. Work collaboratively with the licensing worker (see Definitions) to provide support to the resource family during the placement process;
2. Invite the resource parent to participate in planning through Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings and/or Case Conferences; and
3. Provide the resource family with any pertinent family history and any available photos of the child, the child's family, and any other significant places and/or individuals to assist in completing the Lifebook.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Discuss case specifics and any concerns with the FCM during regular case staffing (see Definitions);
2. Enter the child's information in the NCMEC Portal within 24 hours if a child is reported missing or runs away (see the Standardization of Process: Reporting Missing/Runaway Child to NCMEC); and

3. Ensure the placement is documented in the case management system.

The licensing worker or Kinship Navigator (KN) will:

1. Review and discuss the above procedure with the resource parent and complete the Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement form; and
2. Provide the resource parent with one (1) copy of the Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement form, obtain the resource parent's signature on the form, and upload the original signed signature page to the case management system.

The licensing worker Supervisor or KN Supervisor will guide and assist the licensing worker or KN during regular case staffing.

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## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

#### Case Staffing

Case staffing is a systematic and frequent review of all case information with safety and risk, stability, permanency, and well-being as driving forces for case activities.

#### Foster Care

Foster care is defined as 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parent, guardian, or custodian and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility.

#### Licensing Worker

The licensing worker refers to the DCS Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS) or the Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) worker.

#### Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard is the standard a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care, who is under the responsibility of the State, to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard is characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child.

#### Resource Parent

For purposes of DCS policy, a resource parent includes a foster/adoptive parent, foster parent, and licensed or unlicensed relative or kinship caregiver.

### Forms and Tools

- [8.F Tool: Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard](#)
- Case Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) – Available in the case management system
- [Indiana Relative/Kinship/Foster Placement Reporting Form](#)
- [Medical Passport \(DCS Pamphlet 036\)](#)
- [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children \(NCMEC\) Portal](#)
- NCMEC 24- Hour Call Center- (800)843- 5678
- [Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement \(SF 54642\)](#)
- [Standardization of Process: Reporting Missing/Runaway Child to NCMEC](#)
- [Travel Request \(SF 57156\)](#)

## Related Policies

- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.08 Developing the Case Plan](#)
- [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#)
- [5.22 Missing and Runaway Children](#)
- [6.14 Children Attending Court Proceedings](#)
- [8.11 Parental Interaction and Involvement](#)
- [8.24 Travel and Overnight Stays While in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [8.27 Maintaining Health Records – Medical Passport](#)
- [8.29 Routine Health Care](#)
- [12.12 Foster Family Home Capacity](#)
- [13.09 Conducting Background Checks for Foster Family Home Licensing](#)
- [16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care](#)

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 29-3-9-1: Delegation of powers by executed power of attorney; limitations](#)
- [IC 31-28-0.5: Electronic Records](#)
- [42 USC 675 \(10\)\(A\): Definitions the term “reasonable and prudent parent standard”](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE - DCS POLICY 8.16

*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.*

### **Supporting the Child's Positive Identification with the Child's Family of Origin**

Supporting the child's positive identification and positive relationship with the child's family of origin is one (1) of the most important roles of the resource parent. This is true regardless of the amount of parent, guardian, or custodian interaction and involvement outlined in the Case Plan and Visitation Plan. A child identifying with their family of origin is very important regardless of the permanency goal. The relationship between the child and their family of origin has a long-term effect on the child's self-esteem and future emotional well-being (see policy 8.11 Parental Interaction and Involvement).

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