

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: May 1, 2009
	Section 1: Selecting a Placement Option	Version: 3

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will consider the following factors when identifying placement options for a child:

1. The noncustodial parent's ability and willingness to care for the child before considering other out-of-home placements;
2. The possibility of relatives as placement options, before considering other placement options;
3. The least restrictive environment available to provide for the child's individual needs;
4. Proximity to his or her own community. Whenever possible a child will be placed within his or her own community and school district and within close proximity to his or her parent, guardian, or custodian; and
5. DCS will conduct an exhaustive search to identify a placement option that can accommodate siblings being placed together, unless there is a compelling reason that it would not be in the best interest of one (1) or more of the children.

DCS must submit all placement recommendations to the court. See separate policies, [8.3 Special Needs and Therapeutic Foster Care Options](#), [8.4 Residential Care Review and Approval](#), and [5.7 Family Team Meetings](#).

Code References

1. [IC 31-34-4: Temporary Placement of Child Taken Into Custody](#)
2. [IC 31-34-6: Detention of Alleged Child in Need of Services](#)
3. [IC 31-34-6-2: Placement with Family Member](#)

PROCEDURE

When pursuing a placement, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Conduct a diligent search for any noncustodial parents;
2. Conduct a criminal history background check if a noncustodial parent is identified as a potential caretaker and there are concerns regarding the noncustodial parent's ability to keep the child safe. See separate policy, [8.6 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#);
3. Ask the family if the child is a member of or eligible for membership in an Indian (Native American) tribe. See separate policy, [2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#);

Note: During the assessment, a [Family Network Diagram](#) is created to identify extended family members. The FCM should use this [Family Network Diagram](#) as a tool to support their search for potential relative placements.

4. Determine if the child is part of a sibling group that needs placement:

- a. Conduct an exhaustive search to identify a placement option that can accommodate the sibling group. If the FCM is unable to locate an initial placement, an ongoing diligent search will continue to be made, and
 - b. If siblings will not be placed together initially, develop a [Visitation Plan](#) that is agreed upon by all parties. See separate policy, [8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan](#).
5. Determine if the child has any needs that will affect placement. See [Tool 8.A - Placement Needs Summary](#) and [Tool 8.B Separation and Loss](#);
 6. Facilitate the convening of a CFT Meeting to discuss the needs of the child. Review the Placement Needs Summary to determine the most appropriate placement type for the child:
 - a. Resource Family (Resource Family/Relative Home),
 - b. Special Needs or Therapeutic Foster Care, or
 - c. Residential Placement (Group Home and/or State Institution/Hospital).
 7. Obtain approval by the Supervisor and any other agency staff (as mandated by the DCS local office) of the recommendation to place the child in a Special Needs or Therapeutic Foster Care Home, according to DCS local office procedures.
 8. Once the recommendation is approved by all required DCS local office staff, submit the recommendation to the court and include the placement type, level of care, and per diem rate;
 9. Coordinate and facilitate placement of the child. See separate policy, [8.9 Placing the Child in Out-of-Home Care](#);
 10. Document the placement in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS); and
 11. Within three (3) business days of placement, DCS will have an initial visit with the child and the resource parent(s).

Follow these additional steps based on the type of placement being pursued:

1. Resource Family Home or Relative Home:
 - a. Identify all relatives who may be an appropriate resource for the child utilizing the completed Family Network Diagram,
 - b. Ensure that criminal history background checks are conducted on all unlicensed relative resource homes. See separate policy, [8.6 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Homes](#),
 - c. Identify resource families, if an appropriate relative cannot be located,
 - d. Ensure that criminal history background checks have been conducted within the last year, and
 - e. Contact the identified placement family and discuss the child's needs and the resource family's ability to care for the child;
2. Therapeutic and Special Needs Home: Follow all additional steps in separate policy, [8.3 Special Needs and Therapeutic Foster Care Options](#); or
3. Residential Placement: Follow all additional steps in separate policy, [8.4 Residential Care Review and Approval](#).

Out of State Resource Family Home, Relative Home, or Residential Placement

The following information needs to be submitted to the Central Office Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC):

1. A cover letter that includes the reason for the referral and pertinent issues to be addressed;

2. Completed [ICPC Request form 100A](#); and
3. Child History Data (Social Summary of Family's History).

The Supervisor will:

1. Assist the FCM in determining the appropriate type of placement for the child; and
2. Provide any additional assistance as needed to ensure that the child is placed timely.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

[NEW] Relative Resource Homes as a Placement Option When Domestic Violence Has Occurred

Prior to approving a relative placement for any child under DCS supervision, the FCM will consider the following criteria:

1. The relative household members have no history of domestic violence;
2. The relative believes domestic violence has occurred and does not enable the violence;
3. The relative can and will protect child(ren) from the alleged domestic violence offender;
4. The relative will not reveal the whereabouts of the non-offending parent;
5. The alleged domestic violence offender does not have coercive control over the relative and/or family;
6. The relative and/or family does not fear the alleged domestic violence offender;
7. The family members will report any and all violations of the [Safety Plan \(SF51455/CW0440\)](#) and/or the [Family Support/Community Services Plan \(SF53243/CW3425\)](#); and
8. The relative and/or family has a good relationship with the non-offending parent.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Tool 8.A : Placement Needs Summary](#)
2. [Tool 8.B : Separation and Loss](#)
3. [Family Network Diagram](#)
4. [Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children \(ICPC\) Request form 100A](#)
5. [Visitation Plan](#) - Available in ICWIS

RELATED INFORMATION

Placement with Family Member

[IC 31-34-6-2](#) requires the court to consider placing a child with an appropriate family member before considering any other placement option.

Out-of-Home Placement Philosophy

Out-of-home care will be used only when there is no other alternative to ensure a child's safety and well-being from abuse or neglect. DCS will diligently work to maintain familial connections through visitation and shared activities while a child is in out-of-home care. The parent of a child in out-of-home care is also afforded an opportunity to build on family strengths and learn essential skills in providing a safe, nurturing environment to which their child may return.

[New] Eligible Placements

DCS will claim federal (Title IV-E Foster Care, Title IV-A Emergency Assistance, Title IV-E Waiver) reimbursement on behalf of eligible children who are placed in DCS Licensed, IV-E eligible placements. Eligible placement settings include but are not limited to relative homes, resource family homes, child-caring institutions, emergency shelters, group homes, and private secure care. Ineligible placement settings include those outside the scope of foster care, such as but not limited to detention centers, correctional facilities, hospitals, and boot camps.

[NEW] Child Placed with Noncustodial Parent

When a child has been removed from the custodial parent at least one (1) day and is then placed with the noncustodial parent, this is considered a Trial Home Visit (THV). The Placement History screen in ICWIS should indicate that the reason for the change in placement is THV and the Temporary Absence Tab should be completed. The noncustodial parent's home should not be entered in the 'Placement History' as a placement.

[NEW] Placements that Cannot Be Claimed for Federal Funding

Placements that cannot be claimed for federal funding (i.e., Title IV-E, Title IV-A Emergency Assistance) include those outside the scope of foster care, such as but not limited to, detention centers, correctional facilities, hospitals, and boot camps.

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