



## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

**Chapter 8:** Out-of-Home Services

**Section 41:** Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2024

**Version:** 7

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### POLICY OVERVIEW

Planning for a child to leave out-of-home care and transition to a permanent living situation is an ongoing process and is essential in ensuring a successful transition. Planning for this transition allows time for implementation of services and to ensure the type, intensity, and duration of these services are consistent with the child's assessed needs and the child's Permanency Plan.

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### PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will offer transition services (see Definitions) for a child who leaves out-of-home care, regardless of the child's Permanency Plan (e.g., reunification, adoption, emancipation, and guardianship). The Child and Family Team (CFT) should consider the transitional needs of the child and family whenever the Permanency Plan is discussed or changed.

Prior to a child's transition from out-of-home care, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Review the child's Case Plan/Prevention Plan and Permanency Plan during a CFT Meeting or Case Plan Conference and assess whether it is safe and in the child's best interest to move to the identified permanent living situation. See policy 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings for additional information;

**Note:** DCS will also consider whether separating a child from a sibling that is placed with the child is in the child's best interest.

2. Develop a plan to maintain the child in the permanent living situation following case closure upon the decision to move the child to the identified permanent living situation;

**Note:** DCS should ask the caregiver if they need reasonable accommodations due to a disability to maintain the child in the permanent living situation.

3. Make reasonable efforts to support and facilitate two-way communication between a child's parent, guardian, or custodian and any resource parent who will care for the child (see Indiana Co-Care);
4. Implement the transition services to be provided in the child's permanent living arrangement at least 30 calendar days before the child's scheduled transition. This will allow time for implementation of these services and to ensure the type, intensity, and

duration of services are consistent with the child's assessed needs and the child's Permanency Plan. Services to preserve the family may include, but will not be limited to:

- a. Reunification Services, see policy 8.39 Trial Home Visits,
- b. Family Support Services,
- c. Family Rehabilitation Services, and
- d. Older Youth Services.

**Note:** If the child is transitioning to a permanent living situation from residential treatment, the Step-Down Planning form must be completed 90 days prior to discharge.

5. Submit a referral to the Education Consultant to complete Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) collaboration and discuss best interest of the child during a school transition. Advise the Education Consultant when the placement change has been updated in the case management system. See policies 8.20 Educational Services, 8.21 Special Education Services, and 8.22 School Notification for additional information.
6. Update the child's Case Plan/Prevention Plan to include any services that will be offered relating to the child's transition and any other steps that will be taken; and
7. Work with other appropriate agencies (e.g., Family and Social Services Administration [FSSA], Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services [DDRS], and Department of Correction [DOC]) to ensure the transition occurs in accordance with the policies and procedures of all agencies.

Depending upon the child's Permanency Plan, the FCM will follow the procedures contained in the appropriate policy below:

1. For reunification, see policies 8.39 Trial Home Visits and 5.12 Closing a CHINS case;
2. For adoption, see policy 10.01 Planning for Adoption - Overview;
3. For emancipation, see policy 11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood; or
4. For guardianship, see policy 10.23 Guardianship Overview.

At the time of transition, regardless of the child's planned living arrangement, the FCM will ensure the permanent caregiver or child (if being emancipated) has been given:

1. Information on the child's current needs for care;
2. A copy of the Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood (if applicable);

**Note:** A youth aging out of foster care must be provided all documents listed on the Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood, including the Foster Care Verification form.

3. Pertinent court orders, including the placement authorization, if the child is not being reunified with a parent;
4. Appropriate documents, including, but not limited to:
  - a. A copy of the child's Medical Passport,
  - b. Child's birth certificate,
  - c. Child's Social Security card,
  - d. Child's insurance records,
  - e. Child's individual medical records, and
  - f. Child's driver's license or state identification card, if applicable.
5. Clothing and other personal items accumulated during the child's stay in out-of-home care. See policy 16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care for additional guidance; and

6. The child's transferred benefits (e.g., Medicaid and Social Security Income [SSI]), if applicable.

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## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

#### Transition Services

Transition services are designed to help the child, the child's family, or other permanent caregiver adjust to the child's permanent placement.

### Forms and Tools

- Case Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) - available in the case management system
- [Education Services Consultant Map](#)
- [Foster Care Verification \(SF 56571\)](#)
- [Indiana Co-Care](#)
- [Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services](#)
- [Indiana Department of Correction](#)
- [Indiana Family and Social Services Administration](#)
- [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF 54315\)](#)
- [Medical Passport \(DCS Pamphlet 036\)](#)
- [Step-Down Planning \(SF 57072\)](#)
- [Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood \(SF 55166\)](#)

### Related Policies

- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.10 Family Services](#)
- [5.12 Closing a CHINS Case](#)
- [8.20 Educational Services](#)
- [8.21 Special Education Services](#)
- [8.22 School Notifications and Legal Settlement](#)
- [8.39 Trial Home Visits](#)
- [10.01 Planning for Adoption – Overview](#)
- [10.23 Guardianship Overview](#)
- [11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood](#)
- [14.01 Guardianship Assistance Program](#)
- [16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care](#)

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-10-2-1: Policy and purpose](#)
- [IC 31-26-5: Family Preservation Services](#)
- [IC 31-34-4-8: Change in temporary out-of-home placement; consideration of separation of siblings](#)
- [IC 31-34-19-6: Dispositional decree; considerations](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-7.6: Documents provided to individual leaving foster care](#)
- [IC 31-34-23-7: Change in out-of-home placement; consideration of separation of siblings](#)
- [42 USC 12102: Definition of disability](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 8.41

*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.*

N/A

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