Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect

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Our Mission

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) protects children from child abuse & neglect & works to ensure their financial support.
Child Welfare

Core Functions:

• Protect & keep children safe from abuse & neglect.
• Receive reports of abuse & neglect.
• Complete assessments on reports.
• Ongoing case management to guide a family through services, placement, permanency & case closure.
What is Physical Abuse?

Any non-accidental physical injury to a child caused by a parent or caregiver that results in or threatens serious injury.
What is Neglect?

Parent, guardian or custodian does **not** supply child with:

- Food
- Shelter
- Education
- Clothing
- Medical Care
- Supervision
How Do You Report Child Abuse?

Call the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline

800.800.5556
Who Should Report?

Indiana is a mandatory reporting state. Any person who has reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected shall make a report.

Medical professionals, teachers & law enforcement officials have a higher duty to report abuse or neglect.
Children thrive in safe, caring, supportive families and communities

Reporting

Call 800.800.5556. An intake specialist:

• Directs caller immediately to 911 or law enforcement if child is in imminent danger.
• Listens/asks questions using intake guidance tool.
• Captures report information.
• Sends report to local county office to determine next steps
Reporting

Intake specialists will ask questions about the child’s current circumstances, safety, & identifying information:

- Names of children involved
- Parent, guardian or custodian’s name
- Substance abuse issues
- Mental health concerns
- Ages of children
- Addresses & phone numbers
- Domestic violence
- Weapons in the home

Always report suspected abuse even if you don’t know the answers to all the questions.
Reporting

After the call:

• A thorough review of any known previous child protective services history with the family is completed.
• The intake specialist will finish the official intake report.
• Report forwarded to local county office to determine next steps.
Per Indiana law, certain criteria must be met before a family case manager can be dispatched to a home. If criteria is met, a thorough assessment may be called for:

- Immediately/1 hour (imminent danger)
- Within 24 hours
- Up to 5 days

Calls with similar allegations to an open case are referred for follow-up.
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**Intervention Process**

- **Assessment**
- **Substantiate?**
  - Yes: Court Intervention
  - No: Referral to Community Partners
Assessment

A family case manager will:

• Talk with the report source, parents, extended families, child, siblings, witnesses.
• Visit home or place where alleged abuse/neglect occurred.
• Determine if environment is safe for the child.
• Request medical, mental health examinations, substance abuse screens.
Outcomes of Assessment

**Substantiate**
DCS finds enough facts to prove that child abuse or neglect has occurred.

**Unsubstantiate**
DCS finds no credible evidence that child abuse or neglect has occurred.
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Intervention Process

- Assessment
- Substantiate?
  - Yes
    - Court Intervention
  - No
    - Referral to Community Partners
Level of Intervention

Level of intervention with substantiation:

• Informal adjustment.
• Child in Need of Services (CHINS).
• No formal involvement needed.
Placement Options

Out-of-home care is sometimes needed:

• Relative caregiver
• Foster home
• Group home
• Residential placement
• Psychiatric facility
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Safely Home, Families First

• Children are safely at home with services or with appropriate relatives.
• Indiana law requires DCS to consider relative placement before considering any other out-of-home placement.
• National research shows when children are placed with relatives, there are improvements in outcomes, reductions in case length & fewer traumatic effects of removals.
When deciding to remove a child from a home, DCS will:

• Regard the safety of the child as most important.
• Consider whether the parent is amenable to accepting any needed services.
• Encourage the child & family team.
• Utilize information gathered in the assessment.
• Use information gathered in safety & risk assessments.
Ongoing Case Management

DCS must make reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify the family in line with Indiana law.

Case management assures child’s safety by:

- Scheduling regular meetings with the family & child.
- Ensuring needed family & child services are received.
- Convening the child & family team.
- Completing court reports.
- Developing a plan for permanency.
- Facilitating parenting time & sibling visitation.
Local Statistics

• Jackson County DCS averages 78 assessments per month

• Jackson County DCS is currently working with 174 children. 171 – CHINS/ 3-IA’s
How You Can Help

• Report child abuse to the Hotline: **800.800.5556**.
• Offer to help your relatives, friends & neighbors who are under stress and may need some assistance. Perhaps you can babysit, cook, provide transportation, mentor.
• Become a foster parent: 888.631.9510.
• Become an adoptive parent: 888.25ADOPT.
• Purchase a ‘Kids First’ license plate to help fund prevention services.