

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: November 1, 2014
	Section 1: Selecting a Placement Option	Version: 6

POLICY

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

1. **[REVISED]** The noncustodial parent's suitability and willingness to care for the child, before considering other out-of-home placements;
2. **[REVISED]** The possibility of other suitable and willing relatives as a placement, before considering other placement options;
3. **[REVISED]** The placement type recommendation of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#);
4. The least restrictive environment available to provide for the child's individual needs;
5. 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;
6. Whether there is a compelling reason that placing siblings together would not be in the best interest of one (1) or more of the children;
7. **[NEW]** The child has been identified as a victim of human trafficking and/or domestic violence; and
8. **[NEW]** The child is a member of, or eligible for, membership in an Indian (Native American) tribe.

The Child and Family Team (CFT) should identify the best placement option for the child, unless an immediate placement decision must be made due to an emergency removal.

Note: As soon as possible after the emergency situation, the CFT should determine which placement option will be in the best interest of the child.

The CFT will discuss the identified permanency plan at each meeting, in addition to the concurrent or alternative plan, which will be used if the identified permanency plan is not successful. See separate policy, [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#).

The Family Case Manager (FCM) and CFT should carefully determine what placement would be in the best interest of the child, then DCS must submit all placement recommendations to the court. See separate policies, [8.4 Emergency Shelter Care and Residential Placement Review](#), and [5.07 Child and 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 relative or de facto custodian; evaluation; background checks](#)

4. [IC 5-26.5-1-3: "Domestic violence"](#)
5. [IC 34-6-2-34.5: "Domestic or family violence"](#)
6. [IC 35-42-3.5: Human and Sexual Trafficking](#)

PROCEDURE

When pursuing a placement, the FCM will:

1. Conduct a diligent search for any noncustodial parents. See separate policies, [4.0 Diligent Search](#) and [5.6 Locating Absent 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, [13.5 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;

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 his or her search for potential relative placements.

4. Determine if the child is part of a sibling group that needs placement or is currently in placement:
 - a. Conduct an exhaustive search to identify a placement option that may accommodate the sibling group. If the FCM is unable to locate an initial placement, an ongoing diligent search will continue to be made,
 - b. Develop a permanency plan and concurrent plan, if applicable, which both include the possibility of siblings being placed together, see separate policy [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#), and
 - c. **[REVISED]** If it has been determined that the siblings cannot be placed together or it is in the best interest for siblings to not be placed together, develop a Visitation Plan that is agreed upon by all parties. See separate policy, [8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan](#).

[NEW] Note: The FCM should consider the appropriateness of visitation between siblings and ensure it is documented in the visitation plan.

5. Determine if the child has any needs that will affect placement. See [Tool 8.B Separation and Loss](#);

[NEW] Note: In cases of human trafficking, many children run away from their placements and return to their trafficker or a similar situation from which they came. Also, if placement with a noncustodial parent or other relative is being considered, the child should not be placed until it is determined that the potential placement is not the trafficker or associated with the trafficker. For further guidance, see separate policy [2.21 Human Trafficking](#).

6. Facilitate the convening of a CFT Meeting to discuss the needs of the child. Review the [Placement Needs Summary](#) and CANS services and placement recommendations to determine the most appropriate placement type for the child:
 - a. Relative Family, Foster Family Home, or

- b. Residential treatment center, Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility or State Hospital. This level of placement requires approval of the Residential Placement Committee.
9. Obtain approval by the DCS Local Office Director or designee for children placed in placement types that are different from the CANS recommendation. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#);
10. Submit the recommendation to the court after the recommendation is approved by all required DCS local office staff;
11. Coordinate and facilitate placement of the child. See separate policy, [8.9 Placing the Child in Out-of-Home Care](#);
12. Document the placement in the Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK);
13. Complete the Individual Child Placement Referral (ICPR) for all paid placements in the KidTraks system and ensure the ICPR is delivered to the placement resource; and
14. Conduct the initial visit with the child and placement resource within three (3) business days of placement.

The FCM will follow these additional steps based on the type of placement being pursued:

1. Relative and foster family home:
 - a. Identify all relatives who may be an appropriate resource for the child utilizing the completed [Family Network Diagram](#),

[NEW] Note: In cases involving human trafficking, if placement with a noncustodial parent or other relative is being considered, the child should not be placed until it is determined that the potential placement is not the trafficker or associated with the trafficker. For further guidance, see separate policy [2.21 Human Trafficking](#).
 - b. Ensure that criminal history background checks are conducted on all unlicensed relative resource homes. See separate policy, [13.5 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#).
 - c. Identify foster families, if an appropriate relative cannot be located by working with the Regional Foster Care Specialist or Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), and
 - d. Contact the identified family to discuss the child's needs and the family's ability to care for the child.

Note: Ensure that LCPA staff is included in communications with the foster parent.

2. Residential Placement: Follow all additional steps in separate policy, [8.4 Emergency Shelter Care and Residential Placement Review](#).
3. See separate policy, [9.1 Request to Place an Indiana Child in another State](#) for information that must be submitted to the Central Office Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) Office for out of state placement with a relative, in foster care or in a residential facility.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Assist the FCM in determining the appropriate type of placement for the child; and

Note: Obtain approval by the DCS Local Office Director or designee for children placed in placement types that are different from the CANS recommendation. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#).

2. Provide any additional assistance as needed to ensure the child is placed timely.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

[NEW] Indicators of Human Trafficking¹

If any of the following indicators or a combination of several indicators of human trafficking are observed during the course of an assessment, the FCM should staff with his or her supervisor to determine if a human trafficking forensic interview is needed.

Child Indicators:

1. Child may not be able or willing to speak on his or her own behalf;
2. Child may not be able to speak English;
3. Child may not be allowed to speak to the FCM alone;
4. Child may not have access to identification and/or travel documents;
5. Child may work long hours and receive little or no pay;
6. Child may not cooperate with the FCM during the interview (e.g., provide wrong information about identity and living situation);
7. Child may not attend school or has large gaps in his or her education history;
8. Child may live at his or her workplace or with his or her employer and many other people in a small area;
9. Child may have a **heightened** sense of fear and distrust of authority;
10. Child may have engaged in prostitution or commercial sex acts;
11. Child may have a significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend;
12. Child may be a runaway; and/or
13. Child may be in a public place (e.g., hotel) and found in possession of drugs/alcohol.

[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 [Family Support/Community Services/Safety Plan \(SF 53243\)](#); and
8. The relative and/or family has a good relationship with the non-offending parent.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Tool 8.B: Separation and Loss](#)
2. [Family Network Diagram](#)
3. **[NEW]** [Family Support/Community Services/Safety Plan \(SF 53243\)](#)

¹ State of Florida Department of Children and Families (2009). *Human Trafficking of Child Indicator Tool*. Retrieved from <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/humantrafficking/docs/HumanTraffickingOfChildrenIndicatoTool0109.pdf>.

RELATED INFORMATION

DCS Investigators

A referral may be made to a DCS Investigator to assist with locating an absent parent or relatives for placement consideration.

[REVISED] Placement with a Relative

[IC 31-34-6-2](#) requires the court to consider placing a child with a suitable and willing relative 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.

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 licensed relative homes, foster family homes, child-caring institutions, emergency shelters, group homes, and private secure facilities. Ineligible placement settings include those outside the scope of foster care, such as but not limited to unlicensed relative care, detention centers, correctional facilities, hospitals, and boot camps.

Child Placed with Noncustodial Parent

When a child is physically and legally removed from a custodial parent and placed directly with a noncustodial parent without any intervening out-of-home placement and DCS is given placement and care authority, removal has occurred from the custodial parent. The noncustodial parent is not considered a placement.

When a child has been removed from the custodial parent and placed in out-of-home care (e.g. foster family home) at least one (1) day and is then placed with the noncustodial parent, this is considered a Trial Home Visit (THV).

Confidentiality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth

FCMs should ensure that confidentiality measures are in place when evaluating placement of an LGBTQ youth. Except for cases where LGBTQ issues are relevant to abuse, neglect, removal, placement, or reunification, confidentiality must be maintained. In these circumstances, the youth's identification as an LGBTQ youth should be discussed with the supervisor. Staff should be mindful confidentiality is important and even more critical when working with youth identifying as LGBTQ. These youth may or may not be out, or only to certain individuals. It is up to a youth to determine to whom and how they come out. FCMs should stress to the proposed resource family that it is critical that confidentiality and respect be honored in the way that an LGBTQ youth requests.