

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: July 1 , 2019
	Section 11: Parental Interaction and Involvement	Version: 5

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will encourage and support the maximum appropriate amount of [interaction](#) and [involvement](#) between each parent, guardian, or custodian and the child unless otherwise ordered by the court. Child safety and well-being will be the first consideration in determining the appropriate interaction and involvement between the child and the parent, guardian, or custodian.

Note: Visitation is only one (1) component of parental interaction. See [Related Information](#) and policies [8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan](#) and [8.13 Implementing the Visitation Plan](#) for further guidance.

DCS will utilize regular contact with the parent, guardian, or custodian to track and make necessary adjustments to the current [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#). Incarcerated parents should receive services and treatment while incarcerated, including visitation with the child, unless visitation is not in the best interest of the child. The family’s progress, including successes and any violation of the Dispositional Order, will be regularly reported to the court. See policy [6.8 Three Month Progress Report](#) for further guidance.

Note: DCS will update the [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#) and engage the Child and Family Team (CFT) anytime there is a significant change (e.g., identified needs, parent’s failure to participate in services, and changes in household composition). See policies [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#) and [5.8 Developing the Case Plan](#) for further guidance.

Code References

[IC 31-34-15-4: Form; contents](#)

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Convene and facilitate a CFT Meeting within 30 calendar days of removal or decision to begin concurrent planning by creating a second Permanency Plan. See policy [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#);

Note: If a CFT Meeting is not convened, a Case Plan Conference must be held. See policy [5.8 Developing the Case Plan](#).

2. Discuss and plan for parental [interaction](#) and [involvement](#) with the child, development of the [Case Plan \(SF 2956\)](#), and referral of appropriate services during the CFTM. See policy [5.3 Engaging the Family](#) and [Practice Guidance](#) for additional information;

Note: DCS will document any services and/or treatment available to the incarcerated parent in the [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#).

3. Ensure the child; parent, guardian, or custodian; resource parent(s); and other CFT members understand the maximum allowable parent, guardian, or custodian [interaction](#) and [involvement](#) with the child;
4. Review the [Safety Plan \(SF53243\)](#) and make any necessary revisions to ensure the child's safety;
5. Develop a [Visitation Plan](#) and document the plan in the case management system;
6. Reassess the parent, guardian, or custodian's appropriate level of [interaction](#) and [involvement](#) with the child based upon the effects on the child;
7. Report the family's progress, including successes and any violation of the Dispositional Order, to the court. See policy [6.8 Three Month Progress Report](#);
8. Reconvene the CFT, if the [Visitation Plan](#) needs to be changed based upon the reassessment. See policy [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#); and
9. Document any changes to the [Visitation Plan](#) in the case management system.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

What is Interaction?

Visitation often comes to mind when **interaction** between the parent, guardian, or custodian and the child is discussed. However, visitation is only one (1) component of interaction. Interaction occurs in many forms (e.g., phone calls; emails; letters; or an exchange of meaningful items like drawings, photographs, and gifts). These other forms of interaction take on increased significance if face-to-face contact is not regular or consistent.

What is Involvement?

The effect of a parent, guardian, or custodian's **involvement** in his or her child's life is very critical to the well-being of a child during an out-of-home placement. Examples of involvement include making important decisions about:

1. Health care;
2. Education;
3. Extracurricular activities;
4. Hair length and styles;
5. Attendance at medical appointments;
6. School case conferences; and
7. Participation in CFTMs.

A parent, guardian, or custodian who is not allowed any interaction with his or her child may still be involved through one (1) or more of the examples given above.

Incarcerated Parents

DCS providers, including fatherhood program providers, may enter Indiana Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities to provide services and meet with parents; provided that, in each case, the incarcerated parent has signed a release of information allowing DCS to share the information collected by such providers with DOC.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Visitation Plan](#) – Available in the case management system
2. [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#) – Available in the case management system
3. [Safety Plan \(SF53243\)](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

N/A