

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2012
	<b>Section 1:</b> Selecting a Placement Option	<b>Version:</b> 4

<b>POLICY</b>
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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.

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 other relatives as a placement, before considering other placement options;
3. The placement recommendation of the Child and Adolescent Needs (CANS) Assessment. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs \(CANS\) 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; and
6. **[REVISED]** DCS will place siblings together, unless there is a compelling reason that it would not be in the best interest of one (1) or more of the children.

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](#).

DCS must submit all placement recommendations to the court. See separate policies, [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](#)

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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When pursuing a placement, the Family Case Manager (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. **[REVISED]** 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 can 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 includes the possibility of siblings being placed together, see separate policy [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#), and
  - c. 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.B Separation and Loss](#);
6. **[REVISED]** 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.
7. **[REVISED]** Obtain approval by the DCS Local Office Director or designee for children placed in placement types that are different from what the CANS recommends. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs \(CANS\) Assessment](#).
8. Once the recommendation is approved by all required DCS local office staff, submit the recommendation to the court;
9. Coordinate and facilitate placement of the child. See separate policy, [8.9 Placing the Child in Out-of-Home Care](#);
10. **[REVISED]** Document the placement in the Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK);
11. **[REVISED]** 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
12. Within three (3) business days of placement, DCS will have an initial visit with the child and the placement resource.

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

1. Relative and foster family home:
  - a. Identify all relative 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 home. See separate policy, [13.5 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#),
  - c. Identify foster families if an appropriate relative cannot be located,

- d. Ensure criminal history background checks have been conducted in accordance with appropriate background check policy, and
- e. Contact the identified family and discuss the child's needs and the family's ability to care for the child.

2. Residential Placement: Follow all additional steps in separate policy, [8.4 Residential Care Review and Approval](#).

**[Revised] Out of State Placements**

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 Supervisor will:

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

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

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

**PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

N/A

**FORMS AND TOOLS**

- 1. [Tool 8.B : Separation and Loss](#)
- 2. [Family Network Diagram](#)

**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.

**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 facility. 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 Non-Custodial 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 would not be considered a placement in Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK).

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 non-custodial parent, this is considered a Trial Home Visit (THV). The Placement History screen in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System should indicate that the reason for the change in placement is THV and the Temporary Absence Tab should be completed. The non-custodial parent's home should not be entered in the 'Placement History' as a placement.