

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> March 1, 2011
	<b>Section 36:</b> Expectant Youth and Youth with Children	<b>Version:</b> 2

<b>POLICY</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will assure that all expectant youth are referred for counseling, to assist in the decision making process about the pregnancy.

DCS will ensure that all children who are pregnant or become pregnant while in out-of-home care receive appropriate prenatal care as determined by an obstetrician or gynecologist.

DCS will ensure that the mother and baby are placed together in the same home, unless extenuating circumstances exist (e.g., medical, psychological, home environment, etc.) that prevents the mother from caring for the child.

DCS should not take custody of a child of a minor parent who is in out-of-home care, unless there is additional endangerment that warrants such action. Refer to separate policy, [4.28 Involuntary Removals](#). See Related Information for additional details.

**Note:** DCS recognizes that minor parents, both male and female, have the same rights and responsibilities as all parents; therefore, all minor parents both male and female in out-of-home care, may be referred for services (e.g., fatherhood classes, counseling, parenting classes, etc.).

Code References

N/A

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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**[REVISED]** For all pregnant youth in out-of-home care, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Notify the court if a youth is pregnant when she enters out-of-home care or becomes pregnant while in out-of-home care, to ensure that a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is appointed to represent the child's interests to the court;
2. Ensure that a pregnant youth has access to prenatal care and pregnancy options counseling services;
3. Hold a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting to assist the youth with critical decisions regarding her pregnancy and put an action plan in place, which will include addressing any placement issues and/or concurrent planning issues that may arise. See separate policies, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#) and [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#);
4. Assist the youth with any necessary paperwork relating to decisions regarding relinquishment of parental rights; and

5. Offer family services to the minor parent and to her parent, guardian, or custodian to address any issues related to the pregnancy. See separate policy, [5.10 Family Services](#).

For all expectant fathers in out-of-home care, the FCM will:

1. Notify the court if a youth is an expectant father;
2. Hold a CFT Meeting to assist the youth with critical decision regarding his child and put an action plan in place, which will include addressing any placement issues that may arise. See separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#);
3. Assist the youth with any necessary paperwork relating to decisions regarding relinquishment of parental rights.; and
4. Offer family support services to the youth and to his parent, guardian, or custodian to address any issues related to the youth becoming a father. See separate policy, [5.10 Family Services](#).

For minor parents in out-of-home care the FCM will:

1. Notify the court that the youth has a child;
2. Discuss with the minor parent his or her desire to involve his or her CFT in decisions about the child (i.e. would the minor parent like the CFT to discuss parenting responsibilities?). See separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#);
3. If the minor parent decides to involve his or her CFT, discuss issues relating to the youth's CFT Meetings including, but not limited to parenting responsibilities and placement issues;
4. Allow the minor parent to make informed decisions about the child, free from undue influences and/or coercion;
5. Coordinate family services for the minor parent including, but not limited to, parenting classes, if the minor parent will be involved in parenting the child. See separate policy, [5.10 Family Services](#);
6. Assure that the minor parent has information about child support, Medicaid, and childcare;
7. Refer the minor parent to Healthy Families, <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2459.htm> if the minor parent's child is younger than three-months old; and
8. Create a new [Visitation Plan](#) if the minor parent and the child will not be living together, and the minor parent plans to remain involved in the child's life.

#### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

N/A

#### **FORMS AND TOOLS**

1. [Visitation Plan](#) -Available in Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS)

#### **RELATED INFORMATION**

##### **Services to Male Youth with Children**

The responsibilities and legal rights of fathers extend beyond the obligation of financial support. The father should share responsibility with the mother for the child's overall welfare, including

health, personal development, and support. Regular contact between fathers and children should be encouraged whenever appropriate.

**Parents Who Are Not the Primary Caregiver**

In some cases, the youth is not the child's primary caregiver. The child may live with the other parent or another family member. If the youth is not the primary caregiver, he or she may still be involved in the child's rearing. Any time a youth has a child and is involved in that child's life, the youth should be offered family support services, including parenting classes.

**Financial Support**

Even when DCS does not have custody of the minor parent's child, additional foster care payments can be added to the per diem of the minor parent, to enable the child to be placed with that minor parent. These payments are authorized without DCS taking custody of the youth's child.

When DCS does obtain custody of the minor parent's child, a separate eligibility determination must be made for that child.

If a Child In Need of Services (CHINS) petition is filed and the child is removed from the minor parent, there will be two separate cases in ICWIS.