

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 4: Assessment	Effective Date: July 1, 2008
	Section 8: Entry into Home or Facility	Version: 2

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) may make in-person contact with a child in his or her home or any other place where the child may be.

DCS is required to seek permission to enter a home for the purpose of conducting interviews and/or assessing the home's condition. Permission to enter must be given by an adult living in the home. Children under the age of 18 years cannot give permission to enter the home.

Exception: DCS may only enter without permission when accompanied by a Law Enforcement Agency (LEA).

If one adult who lives in a home gives permission to enter, and a second adult who lives in the home verbally objects, DCS will not enter the home and will instead seek a court order.

DCS reserves the right to revoke a foster home license if denied access to a foster home.

DCS is required to check in, present DCS issued identification, request permission from an Administrator (e.g., Director and/or Program Coordinator, Principal, etc.), and/or follow all written protocols when entering schools, child care centers, residential facilities, emergency shelters or shelter care facilities, medical facilities, or correctional facilities for the purpose of conducting interviews.

DCS may request an order from the juvenile court if admission to a home or facility is denied. If an order from the court is granted, DCS will gain entry by accompanying LEA when LEA executes the order.

DCS will not enter a home if there is suspicion that it contains a contaminating controlled substance. See the [Indiana Drug Endangered Children \(DEC\) Response Protocol](#) further guidance.

Permission to enter a home or facility will not constitute consent to interview a child. DCS will seek permission to interview a child in accordance with the policies, [4.5 Consent to Interview Child](#) and [4.6 Exigent Circumstances](#).

DCS will immediately contact LEA and request emergency assistance if a child is believed to be home alone and it is believed the child's safety and well-being is in danger.

Code References

[IC 31-33-8-7: Scope of Investigation: order for access to home, school or other place](#)

PROCEDURE

Note: Prior to entering a home or facility for the purposes of conducting an interview with a child, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will follow procedures contained in policies, [4.5 Consent to Interview Child](#) and [4.6 Exigent Circumstances](#).

Prior to entering a home or facility the FCM will:

1. Ask to speak to an adult in the house (or facility personnel);
2. Introduce himself or herself and show official DCS identification;
3. Explain the purpose of the visit without revealing any confidential information about the Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) assessment;
4. Seek permission to enter if a home (follow visitor check-in procedures if a facility); and
5. Document permission given to enter home or facility and by whom.

Upon entering a home the FCM will:

1. Exit the home immediately and without alarming the persons inside if at any time he or she suspects the home may contain a contaminating controlled substance. See [Indiana Drug Endangered Child \(DEC\) Response Protocol](#); and/or
2. Discontinue the assessment if at any point the FCM becomes concerned for his or her safety (e.g., persons in the home become hostile or threatening or there are other dangerous conditions in the home). Seek supervisory input to make alternate arrangements to complete the necessary interview(s) and/or home conditions assessment.

If access to a home or facility is denied, the FCM will:

1. Request an order from the juvenile court to gain admission to the home or facility;
2. If court order is granted, return to the home or facility with LEA, who will execute the court order and gain admission;
3. Notify the entity responsible for licensing the home (DSC local office or Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA)) if denied entry to a licensed foster home; and
4. Document that the request was denied and who denied the request.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

[Indiana Drug Endangered Children \(DEC\) Response Protocol](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Home

For the purpose of this policy, “home” means home, foster home, relative home, or licensed child care home.

Facility

For the purpose of this policy, “facility” means a facility or institution, including, but not limited to, a school, child care center, registered childcare ministry, group home, inpatient (residential) treatment center, hospital, emergency shelters, shelter care facilities, juvenile detention center, and Indiana Department of Corrections (DOC) facility.

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