



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services

Section 08: Preparing Child for Placement

Effective Date: September 1, 2023

Version: 4

- [Procedure definitions](#)

- [Forms and Tools](#)
- [Related Policies](#)

- [Legal References](#)
- [Practice Guidance](#)

POLICY OVERVIEW

Placement of a child outside of the family of origin should never be taken lightly; it may very well represent the most serious emotional trauma that a child will experience, even for a child that has been abused or neglected. Time spent on preplacement activities may reduce trauma and problems that the child experiences in placement.

[Back to Top](#)

PROCEDURE

Once it is determined an out-of-home placement or a change in placement is needed, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will prepare the child for the placement to the fullest extent that time permits.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Engage the parent, guardian, or custodian in preparing the child for out-of-home placement or a change in placement, whenever possible;
2. Attempt to coordinate one (1) or more preplacement visits to the proposed home or facility, unless time does not allow (i.e., the removal is an emergency);

Note: When preplacement visits are not possible, the FCM should consider alternate activities (e.g., driving to the home or facility and talking with the child for a while in the car before going inside; sharing photos or a scrapbook of the resource parent; or sharing a brochure of the facility where the child will be placed).

3. Ensure the parent, guardian, or custodian and the child know how they will be able to maintain contact with each other;
4. Provide information to the child about the placement including, but not limited to, information about the caregivers (e.g., names, other children in the home, and culture of the family) and whether any or all siblings will be placed with the child;
5. Ensure the parent, guardian, or custodian and the child know how sibling contact will be maintained if there are siblings who will not be placed together;
6. Acknowledge the feelings of both the child and the parent, guardian, or custodian;
7. Encourage the child to bring familiar objects (e.g., clothes, toys, bottles, cups, personal electronics, photos of the parent, guardian, or custodian), unless the home is a property used for the manufacture of a controlled substance (see policy 16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care and refer to the Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol);
8. Share any additional information with the child, as appropriate, based on the child's age and developmental level;

9. Allow the child and parent, guardian, or custodian and other household members to see each other before the child's removal from the home whenever possible; and
10. Take additional steps necessary to help the child prepare emotionally for the placement as time allows.

[Back to Top](#)

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

N/A

Forms and Tools

- [8.B Tool: Separation and Loss](#)
- [Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol](#)

Related Policies

- [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#)
- [16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Drug Endangered Child Protocol \(DEC\)](#)

LEGAL REFERENCES

N/A

[Back to Top](#)

PRACTICE GUIDANCE – DCS POLICY 8.08

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Importance of Preparing for Placement

Children have feelings of loss, anxiety, and confusion when removed from familiar surroundings and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Caregivers from whom the child is being removed may experience the same feelings. These feelings often are increased when faced with a lack of information regarding what will happen next and what action they may take relative to the situation. It is important for the FCM to acknowledge these feelings. Additionally, efforts should be made to clarify the situation for the parent, guardian, or custodian and, whenever possible, to involve the parent, guardian, or custodian in the placement process in a positive way for the child's well-being.

For more information on this topic, see 8.B Tool: Separation and Loss.

Preplacement Visits

Preplacement visits are an especially important element in the ultimate success of placements in out-of-home care. The process gives the child an opportunity to become more familiar with the new setting and routines prior to placement, thus enabling the child to cope more successfully with the change. If possible, enlist the cooperation of the parent, guardian, or custodian to assist in this process. This participation may encourage the child to form a positive attachment to the resource parent.

The preplacement visit gives the resource parent an opportunity to become acquainted with the child before the child establishes residence. It is also an opportunity for the parent, guardian, or custodian and resource parent to become acquainted and to form the foundation for sound rapport and cooperation in future visitations.

[Back to Top](#)