



## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

**Chapter 8:** Out-of-Home Services

**Section 16:** Resource Parent's Role

**Effective Date:** February 1, 2022

**Version:** 6

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### POLICY OVERVIEW

Foster care provides a safe, nurturing, stable, and temporary environment for children who can no longer remain in their own homes due to the risk of child abuse and/or neglect (CA/N). The resource parent's role is to provide care and supervision on a 24-hour basis for a child who is a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) or under a juvenile court order. Additionally, an important role for the resource parent is to support the child's positive identification and strengthen relationships with the child's family of origin.

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### PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will require the resource parent to:

1. Participate in planning, through Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings and/or Case Conferences, and supporting Case Plan goals, including any Concurrent Plan (see policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings, 5.08 Developing the Case Plan, and 5.15 Concurrent Planning);
2. Provide a positive and nurturing environment for the child;
3. Ensure the child has an opportunity to complete a Lifebook;
4. Provide for the child's basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, and shelter) (see policies 16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care and 16.02 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative and Kinship Placements);
5. Maintain discretion when sharing information regarding the child and the child's family;
6. Maintain a neutral attitude when discussing visitation with the child or other interactions between the child and the child's parent, guardian, or custodian;
7. Encourage and support the maximum amount of interaction between the parent, guardian, or custodian and the child, with consideration given to:
  - a. The child's comfort level;
  - b. Safety concerns;
  - c. The needs of the child; and
  - d. The court's current visitation order.
8. Refrain from speaking negatively about any member of the child's family or other persons with whom the child has a significant relationship;
9. Provide a safe and nurturing atmosphere to allow the child to express feelings about the situation (e.g., feelings regarding the initial separation, abuse or neglect suffered, reunification [if applicable], and visitation);

10. Ensure the child receives appropriate routine health care (see policy 8.29 Routine Health Care);
11. Keep the child's Medical Passport current with the child's most recent health care information (see policy 8.27 Maintaining Health Records – Medical Passport);
12. Participate in court hearings, as appropriate, and encourage all youth 14 years of age and older to attend scheduled court hearings (see policy 6.14 Children Attending Court Proceedings);

**Note:** The resource parent may choose to provide information verbally and/or submit written information to the court about the child in care. The resource parent may submit a written statement utilizing the Indiana Relative/Kinship/Foster Placement Reporting Form; however, the resource parent may choose to submit a written statement to the court in another format.

13. Use the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard when determining whether a child should participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities;
14. Complete the Resource Parent Travel Request form for all non-emergency travel requests for a child and return the form to the FCM within the timeframes specified in policy 8.24 Travel and Overnight Stays While in Out-of-Home Care; and
15. Provide notification to DCS when there is a change in household members (see policies 12.12 Foster Family Home Capacity and 13.09 Conducting Background Checks for Foster Family Home Licensing).

**Note:** A foster family home (FFH) may not provide overnight or regular and continuous care and supervision to a child who is the subject of a power of attorney while providing care to a child placed in the home by DCS or probation without an exception.

Regarding the resource parent's role, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Work collaboratively with the licensing worker to provide support to the resource family during the placement process; and
2. Provide the resource family with any pertinent family history and any available photos of the child, the child's family, and any other significant places and/or individuals to assist in completing the Lifebook.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Discuss case specifics and any concerns with the FCM during regular case staffing; and
2. Ensure the placement is documented in the case management system.

The licensing worker or Kinship Navigator (KN) (formerly known as the Relative Support Specialist [RSS]) will:

1. Review and discuss the above procedure with the resource parent; and
2. Provide the resource parent with one (1) copy of the Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement form, obtain the resource parent's signature on the form, and upload the original signed signature page to the case management system.

The licensing worker Supervisor or Kinship Navigator (KN) Supervisor (formerly known as the RSS Supervisor) will guide and assist the licensing worker or KN during regular case staffing.

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## RELEVANT INFORMATION

## Definitions

### Case Staffing

Case staffing is a systemic and frequent review of all case information with safety, stability, permanency, and well-being as driving forces for case activities.

### Licensing Worker

The licensing worker refers to the DCS Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS) or the Licensed Child Placing Agency worker.

### Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard is the standard a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care, who is under the responsibility of the State, to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard is characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child.

### Resource Parent

For purposes of DCS policy, a resource parent includes a foster/adoptive parent, foster parent, and licensed or unlicensed relative or kinship caregiver.

## Forms and Tools

- [8.F Tool: Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard](#)
- Case Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) – Available in the case management system
- [Indiana Relative/Kinship/Foster Placement Reporting Form](#)
- [Medical Passport \(DCS Pamphlet 036\)](#)
- [Resource Parent Role Acknowledgement \(SF 54642\)](#)
- [Resource Parent Travel Request \(SF 57156\)](#)

## Related Policies

- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.08 Developing the Case Plan](#)
- [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#)
- [6.14 Children Attending Court Proceedings](#)
- [8.11 Parental Interaction and Involvement](#)
- [8.24 Travel and Overnight Stays While in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [8.27 Maintaining Health Records – Medical Passport](#)
- [8.29 Routine Health Care](#)
- [12.12 Foster Family Home Capacity](#)
- [13.09 Conducting Background Checks for Foster Family Home Licensing](#)
- [16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [16.02 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative and Kinship Placements](#)

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 29-3-9-1: Delegation of powers by executed power of attorney; limitations](#)
- [42 USC 675 \(10\)\(A\): Definitions the term “reasonable and prudent parent standard”](#)

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE - DCS POLICY 8.16

*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.*

### **Supporting the Child's Positive Identification with the Child's Family of Origin**

Supporting the child's positive identification and positive relationship with the child's family of origin is one (1) of the most important roles of the resource parent. This is true regardless of the amount of parent, guardian, or custodian interaction and involvement outlined in the Case Plan and Visitation Plan. A child identifying with their family of origin is very important regardless of the permanency goal. The relationship between the child and their family of origin has a long-term effect on the child's self-esteem and future emotional well-being. See policy 8.11 Parental Interaction and Involvement for more information.

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