

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> November 1, 2021
<b>Section 39:</b> Trial Home Visits (THV)	<b>Version:</b> 7	

**POLICY OVERVIEW**

A Trial Home Visit (THV) is utilized to facilitate reunification and permanency for a child by transitioning the child from out-of-home care to the care of the child’s parent, guardian, or custodian.

**PROCEDURE**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will obtain a court order approving a THV when the safety and well-being of the child can be reasonably ensured and the following conditions have been met:

1. The child’s permanency goal is reunification;
2. There is documented progress toward case goals;
3. Safety concerns have been addressed; and
4. The service level of the case can be decreased at least one (1) level (see policy 4.26 Determining Service Levels and Transitioning to Permanency Services).

If DCS recommends the THV last longer than the current court order, a hearing, notice, and court order authorizing each three (3) month extension is required **prior** to the expiration of the current order.

DCS will maintain placement and care responsibilities for the child while on a THV.

Prior to the THV, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Convene a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting and/or Case Plan Conference to review case progress and determine if a THV is appropriate (see policy 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings);
2. Complete the Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment and a new Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment, and review the results of the assessments with the FCM Supervisor (see policies 8.44 Reunification Reassessment and 5.19 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths [CANS] Assessment);

**Note:** The Reunification Reassessment must be completed on paper and uploaded to the case management system.

3. Determine the family’s current service level (see policy 4.26 Determining Service Levels and Transitioning to Ongoing Services);
4. Complete a home visit and examine every room of the home, paying attention to areas where the child may eat, sleep, play, and bathe;
5. Review and update the Safety Plan and/or Plan of Safe Care (see policies 4.42 Plan of Safe Care and 5.21 Safety Planning) to address and include:
  - a. Current referrals
  - b. Services recommended as preventive measures
  - c. Actions the family intends to take (e.g., continue family counseling);
  - d. Community resources (e.g., support groups and child care referral services);

- e. Established family supports; and
  - f. Safe Sleep, when appropriate (see American Academy of Pediatrics: Healthy Child Care, HealthyChildren.org, National Institute of Health, Riley Children's Health Sleep Safety and The DCS Website).
6. Obtain approval from the FCM Supervisor of the Safety Plan and/or Plan of Safe Care and a recommendation for THV to submit to the court;
  7. Work with the DCS Staff Attorney to make a recommendation to the court and seek court approval for the THV if it is determined a THV is appropriate;
  8. Obtain a court order approving a THV. The court order should state DCS has placement and care responsibility; and
  9. Document all actions and outcomes in the case management system.

If the THV is approved by the court, the FCM will:

1. Ensure the THV is appropriately documented in the case management system;
2. Provide continued services to the family during the THV;
3. Facilitate a CFT Meeting or Case Plan Conference to update the Case Plan/Prevention Plan and have the plan signed by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian and the child, if 14 years of age or older (see policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings and 5.08 Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan);

**Note:** The CFT should discuss with the child, parents and resource parents the expectations, responsibilities, and safeguards that will be in place to protect the child as well as services, supports, and the Safety Plan and/or Plan of Safe Care.

4. Provide the parent, guardian, or custodian with a copy of the Case Plan/Prevention Plan and upload to the case management system;
5. Ensure the parent, guardian, or custodian understands the child is still under the care and custody of DCS during the THV;
6. Ensure the child's current school personnel is verbally notified of the child's THV with the parent, guardian, or custodian as soon as possible but no later than the next school day;
7. Complete a referral to the Education Services Team to initiate completion of the School Notification and Best Interests Determination (BID) form (see policy 8.22 School Notifications and Legal Settlement);
8. Ensure contact with the child and family is maintained in accordance with policy 8.10 Minimum Contact;
9. Ensure the family has access to appropriate family preservation, family support, and rehabilitative services (see policy 5.10 Family Services);
10. Continue to monitor the family's progress, update the Safety Plan and/or Plan of Safe Care as needed, staff case specifics with the FCM Supervisor during regular staffing, and assess any need to extend the THV, prior to exceeding the three (3) months (see policy 8.43 Meaningful Contacts);
11. Complete a new Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment and CANS Assessment if it is determined at the CFT Meeting or Case Plan Conference that an extension of the THV is necessary and the child's safety and well-being may reasonably be ensured (see policies 8.44 Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment and 5.19 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths [CANS] Assessment);

**Note:** The Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment must be completed on paper and uploaded to the case management system.

12. Request a hearing and obtain a court order to extend the THV or request dismissal of the Child in Need of Services (CHINS) case **prior** to exceeding three (3) months; and

13. Remove the child from the THV and return to out-of-home care if the child's safety and/or well-being are at risk and the provision of additional family preservation services has not reduced the risk to allow the child to remain in the home safely. If the child's safety and/or well-being are at risk, and the provision of additional family preservation services has not reduced the risk to allow the child to remain in the home safely, the child should be removed from the THV and returned to out-of-home care. DCS will return the child to the most recent placement whenever possible.

**Note:** Court approval will be requested to change placement from a THV to out-of-home placement. Any new allegations of CA/N must be reported to the DCS Hotline (Hotline) and cannot be handled as part of the case (see policy 4.38 Assessment Initiation).

14. Document all actions and outcomes in the case management system.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Review assessment results (i.e., Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment and CANS Assessment), the family's recommended service level, the Safety Plan and/or Plan of Safe Care, input from the CFT or Case Plan Conference members, and other case specifics during regular staffing with the FCM;
2. Approve or deny the recommendation for the THV and any request for THV extension, removal of the child, or dismissal of the CHINS case; and
3. Ensure information is documented in the case management system, including any deviation from best practice.

## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-34-23-5: Placement of a child with a previous placement](#)
- [45 CFR 1356.21 \(e\): Trial home visits](#)

## 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.

### Forms and Tools

- [American Academy of Pediatrics: Healthy Child Care](#)
- Case Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) – Available in the case management system
- Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment – Available in the case management system
- [The DCS Website](#)
- [Family Functional Assessment \(FFA\) Field Guide](#)
- [Healthy Children.org](#)
- [National Institute of Health](#)
- Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment – Available in the case management system
- [Riley Children's Health Sleep Safety](#)
- [Safety Plan \(SF 53243\)](#)
- [The New Crib Standard: Questions and Answers](#)

**Related Policies**

- [4.26 Determining Service Levels and Transitioning to Ongoing Services](#)
- [4.38 Assessment Initiation](#)
- [4.42 Plan of Safe Care](#)
- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.08 Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan](#)
- [5.10 Family Services](#)
- [5.19 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#)
- [5.21 Safety Planning](#)
- [8.10 Minimum Contact](#)
- [8.22 School Notifications and Legal Settlement](#)
- [8.43 Meaningful Contacts](#)
- [8.44 Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment](#)

ARCHIVED: 4/29/2023