Mission

To respond to complaints concerning DCS actions or omissions by providing problem resolution services, independent case reviews and recommendations to improve DCS service delivery, thereby promoting public confidence

.Guiding Principles

- It is in the best interest of children to be in a healthy family and supportive community.
- Independence and impartiality is expressed in all Bureau practices and procedures.
- Positive regard for parents' interest in being good parents, and professionals' interest in doing good work is reflected in all operations.

Contacting the DCS Ombudsman Bureau

Office Hours

8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Telephone Numbers

Local: 317-234-7361

Toll Free: 877-682-0101

Fax: 317-232-3154

Ombudsman E-mail

DCSOmbudsman@idoa.in.gov

Ombudsman Website

www.in.gov/idoa/2610.htm

Mailing Address

DCS Ombudsman Bureau

Indiana Department of Administration

402 W Washington Room 479

Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS)

Ombudsman Bureau

An independent resource for reviewing issues concerning DCS

State of Indiana

What is an Ombudsman?

Ombudsman is a Swedish term for an appointed government official who investigates or resolves citizens' complaints, reports findings and provides recommendations.

What is the DCS Ombudsman Bureau?

The DCS Ombudsman Bureau is an independent state agency housed in the Department of Administration, created in 2009 by Indiana Code 4-13-19. The DCS Ombudsman has the authority to receive, investigate and attempt to resolve a complaint that alleges the department of child services, by an action or omission failed to protect the physical or mental health or safety of any child or failed to follow specific laws, rules or written polices. The DCS Ombudsman may also examine policies and procedures and evaluate the effectiveness of the child protection system and provide recommendations to improve the system.

Who Can File a Complaint?

Anyone who believes DCS failed to protect the health or safety of a child or failed to follow laws, rules or policies may file a complaint. The complainant's identity will remain confidential, except for purposes necessary to investigate or resolve a complaint.

What Should I do before I File a Complaint?

Before contacting the DCS Ombudsman Bureau try to resolve your problem by contacting the local Family Case Manager (FCM). If the problem remains unresolved after contacting the FCM, contact the FCM Supervisor, Local Office Director, or Regional Manager in progression. Many times an agency official can explain a policy, answer your questions or correct the problem.

How Can I File a Complaint?

You can file a complaint by completing the complaint form found on the DCS Ombudsman website, and mail it, fax it or scan and email it to the DCS Ombudsman Bureau. You may also contact the Bureau and request the complaint form be mailed to you. **All contact information is listed on the back panel of the brochure.**

What Services are Provided?

The Ombudsman may:

- Investigate complaints
- Answer questions regarding your inquiry or complaint
- Provide information about departmental procedures and policies
- Attempt to resolve complaints not resolved at the local office level
- Request assistance from the local Child Protection Team.

What Happens After I File a Complaint?

After a complaint is filed, the ombudsman will contact you for additional information and conduct a preliminary assessment of the case. A determination is then made whether to attempt a resolution, refer the case to the local child protection team, or to launch an investigation. An investigation involves a review of all case documentation and interviews with staff and providers. When the investigation is completed, a report is submitted to DCS and the complainant with the findings. When problems are noted, recommendations are provided to DCS, and DCS responds to the recommendations.